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Storytelling

Storytelling

Claudia Royal



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DEDICATED TO
R. FLETCHER ROYAL
my husband

who has shared
and encouraged my
interest in
storytelling

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Introduction

DR. CLAUDIA ROYAL is unusually well qualified to prepare a book of this nature. She has been a teacher of elementary children and a teacher of teachers for this age group. Her studies have had an emphasis in this direction for many years. Her Doctor of Religious Education degree was earned in the elementary field at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

May everyone who reads these pages become more adept at telling stories for character building, and may the “old, old story of Jesus and His love” be the most often told of all.

HAROLD K. GRAVES, *President*
Golden Gate Baptist
Theological Seminary

Preface

STORYTELLING IS AN ART. Just as one expresses ideas in sculpture, painting, or music, so the storyteller takes the ideas of a story and creates with words a picture that enchants the listener and affords rich, esthetic enjoyment. It is a means of communication—that is true art!

Few people are “born” storytellers, and even for those few many long hours must go into study and preparation and experience. Anyone may acquire the art of storytelling if he sincerely wants to. For the beginner, Ruth Sawyer says there “are two primary facts that may provide a springboard. First, everyone is a potential storyteller; everyone receives that racial heritage passed on by traditional storytellers. Second, whether one be conscious of it or not, nearly everyone has been telling stories since he learned to talk.”¹

But time and real effort must be given to it, just as any artist must give time and effort to developing his skill. Regardless of one’s endowment—or lack of it—in this art, one can gain from a study of techniques and from actual experience in telling, the self-confidence to develop into an impressive, effective storyteller. We know this is true: We have seen young men and young women, awkward at first because of self-consciousness, develop into poised and skilled tellers who captivate the attention and win the hearts of their listeners.

¹ “How to Tell a Story” (Chicago: F. E. Compton and Company), p. 3 f.

This book is intended to help the readers to learn the values of the story, to know what story to tell, to discover where to find it and how to tell it. Along with experience, this should help to make skilled storytellers. Throughout these pages, emphasis has been given to the use of the story in the teaching of Christian education, for the teacher of religion, whether in the home or in the church, should be a good storyteller. It is hoped that *Storytelling* will provide an appreciation for the art and a stimulus for further study. Bibliographies have been included to encourage just that. They are necessarily limited and are influenced by personal choice, but there has been an attempt to list some of the best from the past as well as a sampling of the present. Some out-of-print books have been listed since they are available in public libraries.

To you, parents, pastors, religious leaders, teachers, and all who work with people, this book comes with the hope that you may be inspired to “go afield” in the realm of storytelling and find the lasting joys and rich rewards of the storyteller! May it start you on the high road of happy living with your children, your children’s children, your neighbor’s children, your friends and associates! Many happy hours of storytelling to you!

CLAUDIA ROYAL

I

An Ancient Art



G. STANLEY HALL, a great educator, once said, "Let me tell the stories and I care not who writes the textbooks."

Kate Douglas Wiggin declared, "I would rather be the children's storyteller than the queen's favorite or the king's counselor."

Richard G. Moulton tells us, "Stories are the oldest form of transmitted culture, and the most formative."

Storytelling is an art, just as music, sculpture, or painting is an art. Though long since it has been accepted as a method of teaching, stress is placed upon the fact that storytelling is an art in its own right. Something of the artist must enter into the telling of the story. As the painter creates a scene of beauty with brushes and color, so with voice and personality the storyteller creates a word-picture—a work of art. And in creating the atmosphere, he loses himself in the telling.

Powerful is the art of storytelling. The musician stirs his audience with the melody of the piano. The harpist wields the magic of the harp-strings. Even so, the storyteller can play upon the sensitive chords of the soul and awaken a vibrant and purposeful response.

The story may be defined as a series of events, so related as to form a connected whole, and told in such a way that it moves the will to right action. It makes its appeal chiefly to the emotions rather than to the intellect.

The art of storytelling is a sort of spiritual legacy passed down from one generation to another. It is as old as the human race. If one is to have a deep appreciation for it, he must know something of its antiquity and its history.

In man's earliest times, before there was even picture-drawing or written word, there was storytelling. For centuries, stories were passed on by word of mouth, from one generation to the next, from one country to another. Every tribe had its professional storyteller who entertained young and old alike around the fireside at night.

Peculiar to every race were the folk tales and legends handed down from father to son. In China, we find that Confucious used the story form to inspire his followers with his religion and morals. He became one of the world's greatest teachers and law-givers.

The Far East, the cradle of civilization, is considered the original home of the fable and the fairy tale. From these eastern countries have come exotic tales filled with mysticism and adventure. Many of these stories are still told by professional storytellers in the bazaars of the East. To follow the history of the art as it traveled from India, through Persia, to Arabia is an interesting adventure. By means of this "magic carpet," the reader transcends time and space. He traverses the lands of long ago and converses with the people of yesteryear. Through the stories of these ancient lands, he reaches into the heart of a people; he ex-

periences their emotional aspirations and longings, their humor and their pathos, their hopes and their fears. This is true because these ancient stories grew up out of the life of the land, and, like all folk tales, they reflect the homey, everyday life of the people. The traveler may find variations of the same story in more than one country. It is like meeting an old familiar friend, dressed in a different costume.

In India, we find the Jatakas or birth stories of Buddha, which form one of the earliest collections of folk tales in the world. These are stories in which Buddha is pictured in his earlier incarnations in the bodies of animals. They were used by the followers of Buddha to promote their religion. They were carried into Europe at the time of the Crusades and were translated into Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. They were made available to English-speaking people of the twentieth century in a collection by Ellen C. Babbitt. The Jataka tales were widely circulated, and one of the collections was wrongly ascribed to Aesop, the famous Greek storyteller of ancient times. Each story carried a moral similar to that of Aesop's fables. Generally speaking, however, the moral tone of the Jataka tales is on a higher level than that of Aesop's fables.

Perhaps the most widely known of the tales from Persia is the legend of Zal, taken from the "Book of Kings," the national epic of Persia today. Collected over a period of three centuries, the Epic of Kings contains heroic stories of the rulers of Persia. The legend of Zal is the most interesting to lovers of folklore because Zal was the father of the great Persian hero Rustam of Sohrab and Rustam fame, by Matthew Arnold.

In the ancient land of the Arab people, we see the power of the story and storytelling as it was used in the development of another world religion. Across the deserts of Arabia went caravans of merchants, taking their wares to Da-

mascus, to Egypt, and on to other countries. Many of these caravans came into contact with scattered Jewish tribes living in the north and south. From these Hebrew peoples, the nomadic Arabs heard the stories of the Bible. Around the campfires at night, Jewish camel drivers recounted the stories of biblical events and characters, oftentimes with variations which suited their fancy.

Among the number who heard them was a young man named Mohammed. Made an orphan at an early age, Mohammed led a lonely life as a child. Later, he earned his living by conducting caravans across the desert. When, still later, he began to establish his own religious system, he seized upon these perverted stories of the Hebrews. Thus, they became incorporated in the Koran, the holy book of the Mohammedan religion and the guide book for Mohammedan teaching.

From Arabia, also, have come many hero stories and tales of adventure. Many of the heroes were warriors who rode into battle with lusty songs on their lips. Perhaps the most popular of these stories are the ones dealing with the "Romance of Antar." They get their name from the poet Antarah who died about A.D. 600. Two centuries later they were collected by some unknown scholar and have come down to the present time. In Arabia, today, you will find the professional storyteller, usually a blind man called an "Antari," who goes about the market place in the towns and the campfires on the desert telling only these tales of Antar.

The Arabian Nights stories, one of the oldest collections, is familiar to lovers of folklore everywhere. Some scholars believe that these stories originated in Persia but were taken over by the Arabs and given a distinctly Mohammedan flavor. It is said that Scheherazade delayed her execution by recounting to her sultan these one thousand and one tales. After that, he allowed her to live! Certain it

is that childhood has been made richer because these old stories have lived to this day and have been told in appealing, expurgated form to children of succeeding generations. Most vivid in the mind of the writer is the story of "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp."

Centuries before, the ancient Greeks used stories to stir the hearts of their people to a love for country and to an allegiance to their pagan gods. Socrates illustrated his character-building principles with apt stories. Plato, pupil of Socrates, followed in his master's footsteps in his use of the story. The stories of Homer have come to us today from this Greek heritage.

Although she contributed no great lore of stories, Rome, too, had her tales of national heroes, as found in Plutarch's *Lives*. These stories were a decisive element in the education of her boys and girls. The Romans borrowed much of their culture from their captives, the Greeks. They became distributors of their accumulated wealth of folklore and legend, for as they conquered the known world, they carried this culture to other lands.

The early Hebrew people made much use of the story. The first Hebrew storytellers must have traveled with the children of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees. As they camped at night, stories were probably told around the campfires. As time went on, priests and parents, warrior and poet passed on by word of mouth the great, developing epic of the Hebrew people. Thus was kept alive the rich heritage of the children of Israel.

The most skilled storyteller of them all was Jesus of Nazareth. He illustrated his spiritual truths and principles of right living with stories from everyday life. In answer to the question "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told the story of "The Good Samaritan," giving for all time a concrete illustration of man's responsibility for man. When he wanted to picture the love of God, Jesus told the story

of "The Prodigal Son," which left no doubt as to the attitude of God toward men who return to him. Because he realized the power of the story over the human heart, Jesus made much use of this art.

The Golden Age of storytelling came during the Middle Ages. That was the day of the bard or troubadour—the traveling storyteller, who received his "board and keep" as well as many favors in exchange for the entertainment he afforded for family and guests. Usually, he received the patronage of a king or nobleman and lived at the palace while he recited or sang his stories. The troubadour was held in high esteem. We are told that he was given the tenth place of honor from the king. Knighthood was conferred on many troubadours because of their skill in entertaining.

The well-known troubadour traveled from court to court and was "wined and dined" wherever he went. His stories of courtly love, as it was practiced in his day, were told chiefly to the aristocratic society. He told of the purity of the knight and of his love for, and his faithfulness and devotion to, the lady of his choice. Wherever people of nobility were, the troubadour went: to ladies at their dainty tasks, to monks in their cloisters, to hunters on the chase, and to noblemen in the castle. He kept alive the tales of military prowess and of ancient glory. He encouraged a pride in their customs, their literature, their country.

Another group of storytellers, the minstrels, did not fare so well. Likely as not, they wandered through the land, clad in rags. They were of humble birth. At the market place, in the inn, at the hovel of the poor peasant, they told their tales in exchange for a warm meal and a night's lodging. They related tales of heroes of old as well as new stories which they themselves composed. As they traveled far and wide, minstrels learned to use many strange instruments. Their stories were accompanied by the lute and the

harp as were those of the troubadours. Even greater pleasure was afforded by the minstrels as they told their tales to the music of bagpipes, the hurdy-gurdy, the psaltery, the guitar, or cymbals.

In some countries these storytellers were organized into guilds and were considered skilled artists. During the reign of Charles IV they obtained a charter and a coat of arms. These entertainers were revered and welcomed by all classes, from serf to king. In Wales today, bards still promote a special festival and participate in contests.

Gypsies, pilgrims, and crusaders spread stories throughout Europe and the Near East during the Middle Ages. Returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Peter the Hermit told stories of the sad plight of the Holy City, which stirred the hearts of lord and peasant alike. Soon he had gathered five companies of men who set out for the Holy Land. Knights and peasants, good and evil, traveled along together. Coming from widely scattered areas, they had much to give to each other. Along the road as they journeyed and at night when they tarried, they exchanged stories.

Excited by the tales of horror concerning Jerusalem, children were led in the most tragic crusade of them all. Thirty thousand boys and girls, most of them under the age of twelve, joined in the Children's Crusade. After marching from the south of France, many thousands of French boys were lured into slave traders' ships and taken to Egypt where they were sold into slavery.

Thus it was that sometimes on the wings of tragedy folk tales and myths traveled from one country to another. Thus it is that one finds so much similarity in the folk tales and songs of different countries. One recognizes a story by its skeleton and character even though it may be colored and varied by the land and the people where it is found. Collecting stories from the different countries of

the world (there are excellent translations of the classics) can be quite as fascinating a hobby as collecting stamps or old coins and might be a great deal more profitable to the children of the land!

The Puritan influence was predominant in the seventeenth century and is reflected in its stories. During this era, sometimes spoken of as the "Age of Admonition," the simplest of pleasures were considered hopelessly wicked. Children's stories (if such they may be called!) were about death. They told about good children and how beautifully they died. James Janeway (a Puritan divine) wrote a book for children entitled *Token for Children*. This was an account of the conversion, the holy lives, and the death of several children. The purpose of the stories of that day was to prepare children for death, not life.

About the second half of the eighteenth century two forces began to influence stories and storytelling in Europe. The beginning of the Sunday school movement and the educational theories of Rousseau focused attention upon the child. Children's stories began to appear with just a bit of sugar-coating. The theory seemed to be that the story must be for profit, but it did no harm to give it an appearance pleasing to children. Out of their superior wisdom, adults felt that they should turn children into men and women as quickly as possible! This is reflected in their literature. Stories had a deadly serious purpose. The information contained therein was the important thing, and to each tale there was tacked on a moral.

However, a bright ray of light shines out of the gloom of this century. About the middle of the century, John Newberry opened a bookshop for children in the heart of London. The sign above his shop read: "Juvenile Library." Known as the father of children's literature, John Newberry was a versatile person. He was a writer, a publisher, and a manufacturer and dispenser of medicine. He

was a friend to poor writers as well as to children. Many times, he made loans to writers in need. He was the first man to recognize the lack in children's literature and to see the need for stories that would bring delight and pleasure to children.

The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes, attributed by some to Oliver Goldsmith, was published by John Newberry in 1766 with the statement that it was from "a manuscript found in the Vatican with illustrations by Michael Angelo." The first book of its kind written for English-speaking children, *Goody Two-Shoes* is didactic and symbolic in its morals. Just the same, it was entertaining, and it was written expressly for children. It has been read for generations.

To this first English publisher of children's books goes the credit for the first use of the title "Mother Goose" in connection with Nursery rhymes. This collection of Nursery rhymes was included in the book *Mother Goose's Melody*. Attached to the end of each rhyme was a maxim. Part II of this same book presented songs from "Master William Shakespeare." In all, John Newberry printed about two hundred books and sold them for a reasonable price. The books were small and attractively covered.

The influence of John Newberry on children's literature reaches unto our own day. In 1922, in honor of this great benefactor of childhood, a publisher, Frederic G. Melcher, established the Newberry award for the best in children's literature. At the annual meeting of the American Library Association, this medal is presented to the author of the most distinguished book for children published each year in the United States. The awards committee looks to the children's librarians division of the public libraries to select the list of books to be voted upon. Even today, the influence of John Newberry continues to encourage the production of a greater literature for children.

In every century, it seems, some educators have tried to ban fairy tales from children's literature on the basis that they are vicious and harmful to children. However, at no time have they completely succeeded. Each new generation produces its lovers of fairylore who, in turn, pass the stories on to their children and their children's children. For the child under twelve (some say under eight), the fairy story has a magical fascination. If wisely chosen, these fairy tales can contribute to a happy frame of mind, an understanding sense of values, and a balanced view of life. They lend themselves most admirably to the art of storytelling.

In this field, Hans Christian Andersen made a distinguished contribution during the nineteenth century and exerted a powerful influence on the art of storytelling. Andersen is considered by some to be the prince of all storywriters for children. He was the son of a poor cobbler, but life to him was the most beautiful of adventures. He purposed in his heart that he would bring sunshine and cheer to the lives of children. He seemed to have the capacity for entering into the inner life of both people and creatures. He published his first volume of children's tales in 1839, and here we find the make-believe spirit in children's literature. Thus, he satisfied one of the needs of childhood—that of giving life to the inanimate world.

This imaginative literature was supplemented by such writers as Lewis Carroll, George MacDonald, and Rudyard Kipling. All along, the history of storytelling in America is interwoven with that of England. Both countries shared a common heritage of folklore from the Old World. Literature in England appeared early in America and was welcomed by her children. In a very special way, the three English storytellers, Carroll, MacDonald, and Kipling, contributed to the Golden Age of children's literature in America during the latter part of the nine-

teenth century. *Alice in Wonderland* was a fantastic innovation in literature and was meant to be purely for delight.

Contemporary with and a personal friend to Carroll was George MacDonald, a Scotch minister and writer. While they were still in manuscript form, Carroll told the *Alice in Wonderland* stories to the MacDonald children. Unlike those of his friend, MacDonald's fairy tales had a seriousness about them. They were filled with spiritual meaning. Because they are overlong and somewhat other-worldly, they seem to appeal to only the precocious child of today.

Kipling's *Just So Stories*, which came toward the end of the nineteenth century, gave human characteristics to animals. From his many years in India and his familiarity with the Jatakas, Kipling acquired a pattern similar to these old "why" and "how" stories. While delightful for any age, these jungle stories appeal especially to the child under twelve. One of the favorites of young and old alike is "The Elephant's Child."

Whether or not we would limit the fairy stories to only those whose characters are fairies and other supernatural beings or let the term also include the fanciful tale peopled by animals, we will have to concede that fairy stories have added no small part to the history of storytelling.

Along with this make-believe literature for younger children came translations and adaptations of folk tales, myths, and legends for the children just before the teen years, when hunger for the heroic is at its highest. We are indebted to Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sidney Lanier, Joel Chandler Harris, and others for stories suitable for American children of this age. Perhaps the Uncle Remus stories of Joel Chandler Harris could be called the folk tales of our country, for even though these stories originated in Africa, they definitely belong to the Negro of the deep

South. By the end of the nineteenth century, there was an abundance of books for children, but it remained for the next century to popularize these books through the medium of storytelling.

The twentieth century is witnessing a revival of this ancient art. Many factors have contributed to this. One of them has been the tide of immigration to our country which has enriched the song and story of our culture. After the language barrier was broken down, the people from other lands began to share with us the Old World folk tales.

At the beginning of the century, many storytellers saw the need for significant collections of stories; and their collections of the old folk tales, collections from many different countries as well as collections of classics for boys and girls, were published. Ushered in with the new century, too, was a greater awareness and a deepening understanding of the little child. Evidence of this is seen in the stories provided for the early years, heretofore almost overlooked. Typical of this period are *Little Black Sambo* and *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, both favorites of little children today.

Picture books for this age came into their own during the first half of the twentieth century. Earlier illustrators such as Randolph Caldecott, Walter Crane, and Kate Greenaway paved the way. Skilled artists of the present day continue to produce picture books with beauty, gentleness, and gaiety. The Caldecott award, given each year for the most distinguished illustrated book for children, encourages the tradition.

Another contribution to the art of storytelling, coming at the turn of the century, was the recognition of the child by the public library. Up to this time, the child was excluded from the library except in rare instances. One such instance was Pawtucket, Rhode Island, where a librarian

provided a corner of her library with special chairs for children and began lending them books.

Today, in the public libraries, there is reserved for children a light and attractive room, appropriately decorated and comfortably furnished with tables and chairs of the correct size fitted to the child's posture. In the midst of the traffic and turmoil of the great cities, children can go to these places of refuge, where peace, contentment, and expansion of mind and spirit are found. Not only has the public library created a demand for stories for children, but they have also helped to improve the quality of stories by their written criticisms and reviews of the stories offered.

Even the child in the rural community has been provided for: There are the country libraries which send books by mail to remote villages; there are the book-mobiles that go from town to town and allow children to choose their own stories. No area has been overlooked.

The public library has pioneered in the field of storytelling. The first in our country to establish the weekly story hour was the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, and, during 1909, eighty-one thousand children listened to storytellers in Cleveland, Ohio's public libraries.

Stories were introduced in the streets of New England cities during the summer of 1919. They were used to Americanize immigrant people. The tellers went two-by-two into different areas of the cities, dressed as gypsies. Policemen, who had been instructed to watch for their safety, became interested listeners themselves. Young ball-players left their vacant lots and climbed to any heights to view the storytellers as they eagerly listened.

The next year, 1920, a course in storytelling was added to the University of Massachusetts' extension department, and classes were conducted whenever there were as many as twenty interested students. In the twenties, we find that

people were beginning to recognize the need of the little child for stories, and Lucy Sprague Mitchell pioneered for this age.

Marie Shedlock, the noted English educator, gave great impetus to the art of storytelling when she came to America at the beginning of the twentieth century. Traveling over this country, she inspired not only the children but also librarians and others who were in a position to promote the art. Ruth Sawyer, Sara Cone Bryant, Edna Lyman Scott, Richard T. Wyche, and Mary Gould Davis also have made a great contribution to storytelling. Radio, television, motion pictures, recordings—all have contributed to the art.

Because Marie Shedlock revived the art of storytelling and contributed so much to its development, it is fitting that a brief sketch of her life be included here. She was born in 1854 in France, of English parents. At the age of twenty-one she became a teacher in a public school for girls, where she continued for nearly twenty-five years. She finally decided to give up teaching to come to America; and here, she promoted storytelling, especially in public libraries. During the First World War, she returned to this country and spent five years traveling over the States, bringing her listeners under the magic spell of her tales. Her book *The Art of the Storyteller* continues to inspire the artists of our day.

Publishers have become aware of the importance of books and story material for children. In 1919, the Macmillan Company pioneered in establishing a separate children's book department, with specialists in charge. Other publishers followed this example until, today, there are more than sixty such departments.

Since 1940, the curtailment of travel to other countries has given impetus to the trend to present America to young Americans by way of storyland. Many of these

stories picture family groups, with warm and colorful adventures of family relationship. Some of them are focused upon the many races of people who have settled America and upon the rich heritage they have brought with them. An increasing number deal with incidents and characters of historical interest.

We are discovering that there are areas in America where the telling of folk tales continues to this day. In the great Northwest, after the supper meal is over, the lumbermen recount tall tales of the mythical lumberjack, Paul Bunyan, who could fell a forest in a day—by his lone self! Out on the lone prairie, sitting around the campfire at night we can listen to the cowboys tell of the adventures of Pecos Bill, the greatest cow puncher of them all. Deep in the South, lounging on the porch steps at the time of the crickets' evening serenade our hearts can be stirred by the heroic deeds of John Henry, the Negro worker on the railroad.

The Storytellers' League is endeavoring to keep alive the art and tradition of storytelling. To encourage this, many universities now offer intensive courses on the subject, while storytelling has become a regular part of the public library's weekly program. Educators, both in the public school and the church school, are coming to an awareness of the value of this age-old art. Thus, children of today have the opportunity to listen to the tales of the past and to become acquainted with the best of present-day literature.

The present-day emphasis upon the home, with the mother at the center, has called special attention to storytelling. The mother can be the ideal teller, and the home can provide the ideal setting.

The public schools are also giving an impetus to the art. School people are recognizing its educational value. Puppets and drama are being used to enhance the story in

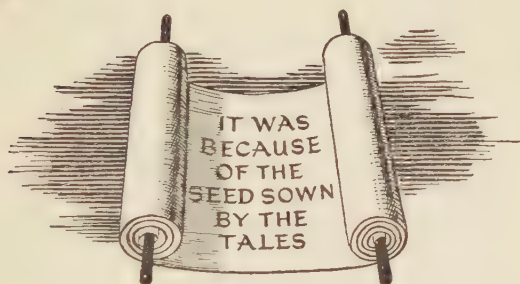
teaching many subjects for facts are eagerly received if given in story form.

Major church groups include the story in their curricula for children. No unit seems to be complete without it. In the church school curriculum, usually a story embodies the truth for the day. The Vacation Bible School program suggests a story which will give the heart of each session's teaching. The missionary curriculum includes missionary stories of many lands and many peoples. Churches which provide a Sunday evening program for children make much use of the art of storytelling.

Stories and storytelling are bringing together the children of many different countries and of many different ages. The poor man's child, the rich man's child, the child of the migrant worker, the child of the college professor—all are coming under the magic power of the teller of tales. The world of science, of music, and of art, as well as the world of nature and of animals, have all been brought more vividly to children by this medium. A big new world is opening up to even the little child through the storyteller's art. The storyteller takes the narrative imprisoned on the printed page and sets it free to wing its way into the hearts of the people.

II

Values of Storytelling



FROM THE PAGES of history and literature come many illustrations of the powerful influence of storytelling. Alexander the Great, at the age of thirteen, listened to stories which told of great struggles to be fought between the East and the West, and he came to look upon himself as the champion of his people.

Peter the Hermit, as a wandering preacher, stirred all Europe with his stories of the desecration of holy places and roused hundreds of thousands to follow him in the crusade which bears his name.

In a humble home, among the slave people of Egypt, Jochebed told stories to her little son, Moses, about God's dealings with the Hebrew children. When Moses grew to be a man, he chose to suffer with his own people rather than to live at the king's palace.

Young Timothy learned of the great characters of the Old Testament from his grandmother and his mother. So

effective was this early teaching that he became a faithful leader among the early Christians.

Many centuries ago, a ruler of Arabia gave a celebration in honor of the birth of a son. Friends came from far and near bringing gifts of gold and fine raiment. One young sage came with a peculiar gift.

Said he, "Each day of your son's life, from the time he can understand until he reaches manhood, I shall tell him stories that will make him both wise and good."

The storyteller did as he promised, and when this baby became a man and a ruler in his father's stead, he became famous throughout the East because of his wisdom and noble deeds. Then his teacher-storyteller wrote upon a scroll (which, it is said, can be seen among a collection of manuscripts at Budapest today): "It was because of the seed sown by the tales."

The influence of storytelling does not stop with individuals. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had much to do with abolishing slavery, and there have been truly great teachers in every age and in every land who have used the story to shape character and to build high ideals in the lives of people.

For the sake of clarity, we shall outline the values of storytelling under two divisions, spiritual values and intellectual values, knowing full well that the two cannot be fully separated.

SPIRITUAL VALUES OF STORYTELLING

The greatest value of storytelling is the spiritual enrichment which it brings to the individual. This is the primary value for the parent or religious leader. Ruth Sawyer relates an experience she had one night while telling stories to a group of drunks at a mission. One man shook his sleeping neighbor and shouted for the whole hall to hear, "Wake up, man! You're missing the time of your blasted life!"

The well-chosen story, effectively told, can be used to form ideals and to mold character. It provides an inner path to the child's life. It can make an appeal to the emotions and stir the will to right action. Formal didactic instruction in morals does not impress the child, but when some desirable habit or abstract virtue finds embodiment in an appealing story-character, he is stirred to imitate that conduct himself. Someone has truthfully said, "The more of heroes children know, the more like heroes they will become."

The story molds character by changing attitudes.—It is true that what you make a child love and desire is more important than what you make him learn. By the story-method, evil tendencies can be curbed and bad habits corrected. The story of *Raggylug*, the disobedient little rabbit, has helped many little children to restrain a runaway desire. A Sunday school teacher had difficulty in getting a Beginner child to leave his offering in the love-gift basket. Sunday after Sunday, he kept the money in his pocket and returned home with it. Then the teacher began to tell stories of generous people of the Bible—the little lad who gave his lunch to Jesus, the poor widow who gave her all. One Sunday, four-year-old David, with a glow on his face, remarked, "I want to give my money to Jesus, too."

(Karen was a child from the old country. Her parents had instilled in her a hatred for this new country where she had come to live. When she entered the Washington school, she became a problem. If anyone crossed her, Karen would stamp her foot and stutter: "I-I-I-I don't want to, and I won't do it."

One day, Jane Jenkins, a new teacher, came into her life. She talked with Karen and won her friendship—on trial! Karen promised to try to control her temper. Mrs. Jenkins searched for stories that would meet Karen's needs. At the end of the first day, Karen volunteered, as

she left the school, "I never said it all this day." A signal was worked out, whereby Karen would hold up one finger for each day she won the victory—that was the "good-by" sign. How happy she was to hold up five fingers on Friday as she waved "good-by."

Ten days went by. The father came to see Mrs. Jenkins to inquire about Karen and her change in attitude. The parents became Mrs. Jenkins' friends. On the last day of school, Karen gave her teacher a big hug and said, "I've never said it one time even, and I just don't think of it now. Thank you for lots of things and for your *good stories*." The school superintendent, the principal, the supervisor, and Karen's physician all marveled at the change in the little girl's attitude.

Another illustration of the power of the story to mold character comes from this same storytelling teacher, Jane Jenkins. Johnny, the eighth of twelve children in a poor Mexican family, had developed the habit of taking other people's property. Through the effective telling of well-chosen stories, his teacher was able to help him overcome this terrible habit.

One day he fairly screamed out in distress, "Teacher, come quick!"

Mrs. Jenkins ran, thinking he was hurt. Tears were streaming down the boy's face. He was holding his hands clasped tightly in front of him.

Said Johnny, "Get it quick! I no touch it, I no take nobody's nothing no more!"

For nearly three years now Johnny has been under observation, and the testimony of Jane Jenkins is "Storytelling pays rich dividends!"

The story brings spiritual enrichment by giving real joy to the listener.—When this cheerful attitude is present, the life of the spirit grows and vital powers are added to the soul. The story gives a wholesome exercise to the emo-

tional muscles of the spirit. The reward of the storyteller is the response of the child as seen in the twinkle of the eye, and the glow of the face, and the barely audible sigh of satisfaction, "Tell it again!"

Not only children, but also young people need to experience this spiritual enrichment. Sara Cone Bryant tells of a scene she witnessed in the reception room of a woman's dormitory. A company of college girls were gathered about a frail-looking woman with bright eyes. The little woman was telling a story—a child's story—about two mice: one of them was good, the other bad.

At first, the attention seemed forced and the facial expressions of the listeners suggested boredom. Soon, however, silence fell over the girls as their faces relaxed into smiles and then into audible laughter. The storyteller had brought relaxation and laughter to the lives of earth-bound young women.

Bringing joy into the life of the individual does much toward solving the problems of life. Happiness feeds the soul. In a happy environment, the soul is enlarged and enriched in spiritual experiences. Happy thoughts and kindly deeds are the logical sequence of such an atmosphere. Our government has published a free bulletin entitled "Are You Training Your Child To Be Happy?" Mothers will do well to look to the matter of cultivating a sunny disposition in their children, and stories can be a vital means to this end.

The story provides release from tensions.—In this day of regimentation, children, as well as older people, need times of relaxation. The story causes contentment and satisfaction to take the place of restlessness and disorder.

One rainy day, the kindergarten children of a private school were forced to take their play period in the basement social hall. They were about as quiet as a herd of stampeding cattle when the teacher began the story of

Epaminondas. At first, only the children at the front of the large group gave attention. By the time the little colored boy had returned from his Auntie's house the second time, order was established, and the children were in a happy, listening frame of mind: relaxed and unmindful of the inclement weather outside. While in this relaxed mood, the child can enter into the experiences and lives of others.

The story can help to develop a sense of humor.—This means of spiritual enrichment is closely akin to that of release of tension. Some people are blessed with a sense of humor from birth, others must have it developed, while all of us need to have it exercised and enlarged. This can be done through the humorous story.

A sense of humor helps to maintain a true balance in life; it gives the power to see things in their right relationship. Some children live in a depressing environment, where cares and grave responsibilities are prematurely thrust upon them. Some people naturally have a melancholy outlook. For these especially, the humorous story can prove most beneficial. Kipling's *Just So Stories* are a good example of the humorous story that appeals to young and old alike.

The story opens the windows of the imagination.—Through the imagination the listener enters into the experience of others—thus is kindled a sympathy and an understanding of life outside his own. In helping the individual to feel intensely the strivings of others, the storyteller can teach honesty, fair play, respect for custom and authority, love for parents, industry, and bravery.

The kindergarten teacher was telling her group of children the story *How Spot Found a Home*. Spot, a homeless kitten, went up and down the alley uttering a plaintive cry, "Meow! Me-o-ow! Me-o-ow! I've nothing to eat, I've nowhere to sleep, I've no place but the street." A second

time the rhythmic cry was repeated. Five-year-old Joe, with a look of distress on his face, exclaimed, "Don't say that again! I can't stand it." By means of the story, the child can be taught fair dealing with creature and person alike.

The story establishes a happy relationship between storyteller and listener.—Psychologists call this empathy. When teller and listener enter the enticing realm of storyland, there follows a deep and abiding relationship between them. The story is a unifying art and draws people together just as singing does.

On one occasion, Sara Cone Bryant was visiting her three-year-old niece. For some reason, the little girl had expected another aunt, the storyteller's sister. All the first day the niece would have nothing to do with Miss Bryant. The next morning, when she was having her hair curled, Miss Bryant drew up a stool and began to tell her about "tingly-tanglies that curl both weeny legs round *so*, and hold on tight with both weeny hands *so*, and won't let go."

At first, the three-year-old paid scant attention; then she queried, "What's ti-ly-ta-lies?" As the story progressed a voice demanded, "Say more!" When the curls were finished, the niece deliberately climbed into her aunt's lap. Then, in a loving voice, she said, "Aunty Sairy, Aunty Sairy, I love you so much I don' know what to do!" As the little one led her aunt to breakfast, she explained, "I didn' know you when you comed las' night, but now I know you all the time."

There is no better approach to the child's heart than by way of a story.

INTELLECTUAL VALUES OF STORYTELLING

It has been pointed out that the greatest appeal of the story is to the emotions—to stir the will to right action. However, there are some intellectual values, which are

closely related to the spiritual values and react favorably upon them. Whatever benefits the mind can promote spiritual growth; the two are inseparably linked together.

The story imparts information.—It teaches truth in concrete form. Little children cannot understand abstract terms or symbolic language. They do understand child-life stories about people and things with which they are familiar. The child who listens to stories learns new words and beautiful ways of expressing his thoughts. His knowledge of the world outside his own environment is enlarged. It is believed that the child who has a rich heritage of story-lore learns to read earlier than the less fortunate child.

Storytelling introduces the individual to the best in literature.—No longer should we allow the corner drug-store, the newsstand, or the loan library to provide the reading matter for our children, our young people, or our adults. In far too many instances, these commercial concerns appeal to the lower instincts. Their chief desire is not character-building but money-making. Parents and religious leaders must learn that their responsibility to supply helpful and enriching literature is as great, if not greater, than to provide for the physical needs of life. One is as essential to proper growth as the other.

When the child is introduced to good literature, chosen to meet the needs of his own age group, he will not likely venture into untrodden, unseemly paths. When he has experienced the thrill of the great story of adventure, the charm of the age-old folk tale, or the challenge of the true-to-life Bible story, he will turn away from the sordid and cheap imitation, recognizing the unreality of the latter.

By means of storytelling, children may become acquainted with the great characters of literature which all well-informed people should know and for which there is

so little time in later years. The public library has done much in this field by means of their story hour. The church library can use the same means to present and arouse interest in their books—many of which are not found in the public library. Mission books are eagerly read by children, when they are introduced by story method.

Richard Thomas Wyche, organizer of the National Storytellers' League, tells of an experience in an isolated seacoast village of the South. He became the teacher for the children of these fishermen, whose village had not even one library. He found a depressing apathy concerning school subjects and learning of any kind. One day he told the children the story of "Hiawatha's Fishing." They became interested, wanted to hear the story retold, and dramatized it on the playground. After a period of continued storytelling, the children read Longfellow's version and became interested in literature and other school subjects.

Storytelling gives the child opportunity for self-expression.—Good English and beautiful word pictures become his. He wants to repeat the stories to others—thus he grows in self-expression. In his absorption of retelling the story, the timid child may lose his self-consciousness, and thus his personality has a chance to grow.

STORYTELLING IN THE HOME

A discussion of the values of storytelling would be incomplete without mentioning the place of the story in the home. The mother should realize the glorious opportunity she has in the story time. In the home, the story may be chosen which will fit the individual needs of the child. The story furnishes the mother one of the greatest avenues of approach to the soul of the child, and her first duty to her child is to nourish his spiritual life. One adult, look-

ing back upon his childhood, remarked, "I don't think a home is a home without a story hour."

When a child asks for a story, do not give him a reading from a book. When this substitution is made, a discerning observer will notice the lessening of eagerness on the part of the child. Those who know children can feel the difference. When a story is told, the teller is free; when it is read, the reader is bound by the printed page. The reader must look at the printed page, while the storyteller can look into the face of her audience. Thus it is easier to hold the attention. The teller's hands are free to enhance the story, while the reader's hands are busy, holding the printed page. For the storyteller, the words can come spontaneously, while she establishes rapport with her listeners. When the story is told, the listeners receive the message through the personality of the storyteller, for the music of the teller's voice brings relaxation to the listeners and builds a bridge over which her personality crosses to her listeners.

By means of the story, a mother may gain the confidence of her child to such an extent that a close comradeship through the years will result. The bedtime can become one of the happiest memories of childhood. When the story becomes a part of this quiet-hour, it brings a feeling of contentment and releases influences that can work in the subconscious throughout the night. A story based on a child-life situation, a Bible story, and a prayer time can bring to the children a benediction for time and eternity. No child should be cheated of this evening hour, this happiness and comradeship with his parents.

We are constrained to say, with Partridge, that the home is the great guardian and educator of the individuality of the child. The delightful experience of storytelling should be associated with the home and the family circle.

Many other values of storytelling could be enumerated;

enough have been mentioned to stress its importance. Although all ages can be blessed by the story, perhaps the child receives the greatest benefit. The stories heard during childhood become fixed and lasting possessions. They stay with the child through the years and, as their ideals become his ideals, do much toward molding his character. The little boy who hears good stories in his childhood will read good books in his boyhood and manhood years.

Even as the Pied Piper of Hamelin drew the children of the village with his music, so may the storyteller win the confidence of the children and lead them wheresoever she will. When one realizes the true values of storytelling, he may be constrained to say, as did Kate Douglas Wiggin, "I would rather be the children's storyteller than the queen's favorite or the king's counselor."

III

Choosing the Story

Nursery, Beginner, Primary



THE ARTIST STORYTELLER will choose a story that he is sure he can bring to life. The story must be attractive to him, else it will not attract his listeners. The language must be suited to the story, for that is as essential as the plot. It must make its appeal as a story told rather than as a story read. Storytelling is essentially an oral art.

Although certain types of stories appeal to certain age groups, some general factors govern the choice of a story for any age group.

It should be pointed out that people of the same age group have differing interests. A story of farm life would

not have the same attraction for the city child as for the rural child. Likewise, a story of a policeman or a streetcar would not have the same meaning for the rural child.

This is not to say that stories outside the child's experience should never be given. Many such stories should be used in order to increase the child's knowledge and enlarge his sympathies. However, preparation and explanation should precede the stories of unfamiliar things and experiences. Pictures and conversation can explain unknown terms.

Katherine Dunlap Cather relates that a professional teller told a story of the coyote to a group of Italian children. They failed to listen and were even disorderly, because they had never heard of the creature. That afternoon, a college girl with no special training in storytelling, gave the story of a lost nanny goat, and these same children sat spellbound. This girl understood children and took their environment into account.

Many children are in dire need of levity and relaxation. For these, the storyteller should choose the nonsense tale, such as "Bre'r Rabbit and the Tar Baby," "Little Black Sambo," or the "Elephant's Child." Beware of the use of sad stories with children! In an earlier day, children's literature was filled with sad incidents, with the express purpose of preparing them for death. Today, students of child life realize that a story's primary purpose is to prepare for life—happy, useful life.

Other children seem to lack moral purpose and to have no fixed principles or ideals. For these, a correct choice would be the story in which characters exemplify the desired virtues. Needless to say, no story in which wrong triumphs over right should ever be told to children. Be certain that the moral influence of the story is positive.

Always, the story should have good literary form. This is to say that the language and style should portray artistic

beauty. This does not mean that the dialect story cannot be used. It does mean that grammatically correct speech forms should characterize stories for children—unless that speech represents the dialect of another nationality. Even then, care must be exercised lest the storyteller appear to be facetious. Perhaps a safe guide would be to use a dialect story only when the group is of one nationality.

With these general factors in mind, there are some questions that one needs to answer before selecting the story:

1. What of the cultural advantages of the listeners? Have they a rich background of story lore?

2. What of their experiences? What are their relationships outside the home?

3. What of their economic status? Do they come from poor homes, middle class, or homes of wealth?

4. Do they live in the country or city? Have they ever lived in the other?

5. Do they have a normal life or are they overburdened with cares?

6. Of what nationality are they?

It has been pointed out already that the storyteller is an artist. Just as an artist must know colors in order to select the right ones for a certain picture, so the storyteller must know the interests of different age groups in order to choose the story best suited to that age. For a story should be given to a child or young person at the time when it will mean the most.

When we let the characteristics and interests of the age group guide in the selection of stories, we work with God, because he has provided the strong interests at the time when there is the greatest need for a particular type of story. These different interests are expressions of the characteristic needs of that particular age. The storyteller must study the child and choose the story to meet the needs of the gradually unfolding life. If one would be a great

storyteller, he must study children and children's literature.

THE EARLIEST YEARS

At a very early age, children begin to show interest in music, pictures, books, and stories. It is difficult to state a definite time at which the baby begins to give attention to language experiences, because this varies with individual personalities. However, we would like to stress the fact that this can be determined to a large degree by the adult who guides the baby's growth and development. We would like to make some general suggestions that may prove helpful in working with babies from birth through the age of three. For this study, we shall make three age-group divisions.

The baby—birth to two.—There is a period in the life of the little baby when he may go through an experience which we shall speak of as "story readiness." Just as reading readiness prepares the kindergarten child for reading in the public school, so language experiences prepare the little one for story time and may be spoken of as story readiness. The little baby only a month or two old enjoys being sung to. A few months later, the singing may be accompanied by movement of the fingers called finger-play. The sound of the voice and the movements of the hand bring a smile to the baby's face and give him a feeling of being loved. Singing him these finger plays, lullabies, and nursery rhymes prepare him for story time, for he is forming the habit of listening to the sounds around him.

Very soon, even before he is a year old, the baby is ready to look at a large picture of a familiar object while someone talks to him about the picture. He will not understand all that is said, but he will receive an impression. Such a time with the baby should be short, for his attention will be brief, and it is best not to tire him.

Soon the child will begin to connect the words he hears with the picture he sees. As he develops, he will begin to look forward to this experience which can grow into a story time. Thus, the mother in the home has a special opportunity to develop in her baby a love for stories, while workers in the churches can provide additional enriching experiences.

The values of such "conversational" times at this age level are definite. Telling a baby a story helps to satisfy his fundamental need of being loved and cherished, and both stories and songs contribute to a cheerful, happy disposition. They encourage the cultivation of such character traits as friendliness, cheerful obedience, and self-control. As has been mentioned, stories play a large part in language development, for the words and phrases a child hears unconsciously become a part of his vocabulary. The sharing of beauty in picture, song, and story can never begin too early.

Somewhere between the first and second birthday the baby can begin to enjoy a well-chosen story. In addition to the ready-made stories found in books, one can relate an extemporaneous narrative from the little one's own experiences. Necessarily the story must still be brief—not more than a minute or two. Sometimes, it will be merely a running account of an immediate experience.

Before the age of two, it is thought best to tell the story to the individual child. Most stories which are used with the kindergarten age can be used with nursery age children if they are condensed and simplified. Their stories will be about mother, other babies, and familiar incidents taken from home life. They like much repetition in the story, and they like to have their stories repeated over and over.

The two-year-old.—Stories for the two-year-old are very much like those for the just-before-two-year-old, only a

little longer. His stories are about the here-and-now. Usually, they will consist of prolonged conversations about his everyday experiences. While one is helping the child of this age with his dressing he can relate a spontaneous story about the incident. The two-year-old will listen to a recital of activities in which he is engaged at the moment, such as eating, playing, looking at pictures, going to sleep, and the like.

A little later, the small child's stories may include familiar events and experiences of the immediate past. These stories must be brief, still not more than a minute or two in length, but they can now include stories about other children of the same age and the experiences they have had. The tale is still told to the individual and must remain the realistic, true-to-experience type of story.

Occasionally, the small child should have stories that are beyond his understanding, and he will sit entranced if the storyteller makes good use of his voice. This age seems to enjoy the sound of the words and the music of the phrases. His pleasure seems to come from the rhythm of the story rather than from its content: the rhythm of sound, the rhythm of movement. Thus his imagination and experience are stretched a little beyond his present environment.

The three-year-old.—Life unfolds new powers for the three-year-old. By the end of the third year, he has usually doubled his stature at birth and has experienced a corresponding emotional, mental, and social growth. Getting acquainted with the three-year-old is like meeting a charming new friend. One of the best ways of getting acquainted with him is by way of the story.

Stories rich in sense impressions appeal to the three-year-old. Seeing words, hearing words, feeling words, smelling words, tasting words—all add up to an absorbing tale for this age. Omit the descriptions and explanations, if you please! Keep the story moving.

The three-year-old is a question mark! He asks questions about everything he sees, hears, feels, smells, or tastes. Many times these questions can be answered best with stories. Wise is that adult who takes time for the child's questions and gives in story form the information he desires. At this age, the child has a longer attention span and really enjoys listening to stories. He will join a small group in the experiences of story time, demanding that his stories, when retold, be repeated word for word and phrase for phrase, without changing. Should the storyteller miss an incident or change the wording of a phrase he will forthwith be corrected!

Besides enjoying the stories that are told to him, the three-year-old often likes to make up his own stories. He is intensely aware of his own immediate world—a world that centers about himself. His stories will be about his toys, his accomplishments, himself. They will reflect his interests, his groping for a more adequate vocabulary, his love of rhythm, his awakening sense of humor.

Many times the picture book affords the young child his first experience with literature. The pictures should be realistic in their subjects. The book should be of a size that little hands can easily manage. The construction of the book is important also. The paper should be tough and should have a dull surface. The book should be bound in a sturdy cover of a hard, washable material, designed to survive much handling and affording the possibility of keeping it relatively clean.

Long before he can read, the little child can recall the action of a story by means of the illustrations. Therefore, the pictures in his book either should tell a story in their continuity or each picture should tell a complete story. Since pictures supplement actual experience for the little child, they should be clear with clear lines. The colors should be bright, and the subject matter should be real-

istic and familiar and should portray action. Bright colors mean harmonious, pleasing colors, not harsh, noisy colors. The pictures should be as large as the book will allow, page size if possible. They should include no more than two or three objects, with little background and detail. Too many subjects in a picture only confuse little children. The central figure should stand out in bold relief.

This type of picture book may cost more than we are accustomed to paying; but good books are an investment in character, and character is easily influenced at this early age. One of the best ways to build character during these earliest years is by means of the story.

Book list

1. Bacmeister, Rhoda W., *Stories to Begin On* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1940). These are short, short stories about nature, the home, and all familiar things. True-to-experience type of stories, which can be used with children from the time they are eighteen months old. Beautifully illustrated by full page pictures from real life.

2. Bacmeister, Rhoda W., *Caring for the Run-About Child* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1942). This book concerns itself with the two- to six-year-old. There is a chapter on music and one on stories. In the Appendix, the author gives a graded list of picture books and story-books.

3. Baruch, Dorothy Walter, *Parents and Children Go to School* (New York: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1939). Chapters XVIII and XIX deal with books, stories, and music for the nursery and kindergarten child. Stories, picture books, and music are listed in Appendix A and B.

4. Baruch, Dorothy Walter, *The Two Bobbies* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1937). These are realistic stories of everyday experiences about the home and the neigh-

borhood. The two Bobbies are neighbor children: Bobbie Joe and Bobby Jane. There are some short, short stories for the earliest years.

5. Dalgliesh, Alice, *First Experiences with Literature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932). An excellent guide for those who work with the nursery age. Chapter six gives suggestions on the technique of storytelling.

6. Freeman, G. La Verne and Ruth Sanderlin, *The Child and His Picture Book* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1933). Out of their experiences with children the authors tell of the nursery child's choice of picture books. A thorough discussion of the type of picture book to use with the little child.

7. Graham, Kenneth, *The Wind in the Willows* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953). These are stories the author told his small son at bedtime. The characters carry the names of small animals: a water rat, a mole, a toad. Stories that are fun to read and fun to tell! Illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard.

8. International Kindergarten Union, *Told Under the Blue Umbrella* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948). This volume has stories for the nursery age as well as for the kindergarten and primary ages. These are realistic stories "that either are or might possibly be" taken from the little child's everyday experiences.

9. Jackson, Mrs. Kathryn, ed., *Santa Claus Book* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952). A "Big Golden Book" for the little child. There are forty-three Christmas stories and poems. Delightfully illustrated with bright colored pictures.

10. *The Tall Book of Mother Goose* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1942). A beautiful book of Mother Goose for a reasonable price. Illustrated by Feodor Rojankovsky.

11. Petersham, Maud and Miska, *The Rooster Crows* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1945). Nursery

rhymes, counting games, finger plays, and other jingles. 1946 Caldecott award.

12. Slobodkin, Louis, *Our Friendly Friends* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1951). A charming picture book of farm life. Very beautiful is the picture of nighttime, when the children and their animal friends go to bed.

13. Walker, Marian, *The Little Red Chair* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932). Stories for the child from two-and-a-half to five. Each short story has a full page, colored illustration.

KINDERGARTEN AGE

Can you remember the stories you liked when you were a pre-school child? There was more time for storytelling then, and the delightful hours with mother may have been among the brightest memories of childhood. Perhaps it was while the "tingley-tanglies" were being combed out of the hair, or during the twilight hour at the close of the day, that your story time came.

Beginning with the earliest years, there is an interest in rhythmic stories, which include much repetition, not only of words, but also of ideas. Animal stories, in which animal cries are imitated, appeal to the little child. When he has been introduced to the lilt and the rhythm of the story, the child wants it repeated in that same form. To change it mars the pleasure for him, and he is sure to supply any omissions!

Certain qualities seem to characterize stories for children of this age. On one occasion, many children of kindergarten age were asked to name their favorite stories. Their choices were the old favorites: "The Old Woman and Her Pig," "The Three Bears," and "The Three Little Pigs."

Stories of familiar things and people.—For little children, one must go from the known to the unknown, else

they cannot visualize the incidents and characters portrayed. Strange events and personages confuse the little child. Symbolic language has no place with this age. Beginners dwell in the realm of realism. They are interested in the doings of children their own age. They want to know about natural objects and living creatures.

Stories with much repetition.—So characteristic is this quality that one writer has provided a book for little children entitled *Tell It Again Stories*. Children do not tire of hearing a phrase or an incident repeated; to them, it is like meeting an old friend.

Reviewing the three stories listed previously, one finds that they all have much repetition. Just as little children like repetition in the same story, so they enjoy hearing familiar stories repeated. It seems to give them a sense of security and deep satisfaction.

Stories with rhythmic phrases or jingles.—These add to the pleasure of the repetition. Children love the sound of words. A three-year-old boy hears a new word and goes about the house all day using it in various ways. Children like the sound of a jingle because it appeals to their sense of humor. They seem to sit back and relax, with no strain of listening, but the storyteller hears a chuckle of delight as she comes repeatedly to a rhythmic phrase.

Stories where something happens all the time.—Little children are not interested in vivid descriptions or lengthy explanations. Their stories must have continuous movement, with one event following closely another event. Children become restless with much description—they want to get on with the story. The plot must be simple—one that they can follow without strain—and the characters must be few and familiar.

Listed below are a few of the favorite stories and books for this age group. As the storyteller gains experience, she will want to select her own stories. Many stories for older

ages can be adapted for the little ones, as the storyteller becomes more skilful in her art.

Recommended stories

1. Bannerman, Helen, *Story of Little Black Sambo*. One of the children's best loved stories. It has never been out of print since it was published in 1899. A little black boy loses his red coat, purple shoes, and other things to a tiger! The story ends happily with Sambo back in his home with his possessions restored. Here, he eats 169 pancakes made of tiger butter. Just a nonsense tale for sheer pleasure.

2. Potter, Beatrix, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. Peter Rabbit disobeys his mother and gets into trouble in Mr. McGregor's garden. He suffers the consequences when he has to go to bed after a dose of camomile tea while his brothers, Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail, eat currant buns for supper. A masterpiece for little children written originally for the author's five-year-old friend, Noel Moore.

3. Bryant, Sara Cone, "Raggylug" found in her book *How to Tell Stories to Children*. Another rabbit story. When Raggylug says, "Pooh, I'm not a baby anymore" and decides to disobey his mother, he runs into danger. His mother comes to the rescue, and after this, "You'd better believe, he minded!"

Book list

1. Bailey, Carolyn Sherwin and Lewis, Clara, *For the Children's Hour* (New York: The Platt and Munk Company, 1914). A book of stories for the kindergarten age. Especially adapted to storytelling in the home.

2. Bailey, Carolyn Sherwin, *Little Folks Merry Christmas Book* (Chicago: Albert Whitman and Company, 1948). This born storyteller has given us another book of stories that speak directly to small children. Her love of Christmas shines out in all these delightful stories.

3. Bailey, Carolyn Sherwin, *Tell Me Another Story* (New York: The Platt and Munk Company, 1918). The author has grouped these stories according to subject, with three to each group. The subjects include: home, children, family, clothing, food, toys, trade life, farmer, school, birds, animals, birthdays, fairies, the seasons, and holidays. Each group may be given as a unit, or the stories may be used separately.

4. Bailey, Carolyn Sherwin, *Merry Tales for Children* (New York: The Platt and Munk Company, 1921). Children need laughter. This they can find through stories which Miss Bailey has drawn from sources old and new, tales of laughter for the little child. Included in the book are stories about the home, animals, holidays, fairies, and folk tales, and a group she whimsically classifies as a merry company.

5. Bailey, Carolyn Sherwin, *Stories Children Want* (New York: The Platt and Munk Company, 1931). Miss Bailey has given us another book of stories for children of kindergarten age through the elementary school age. All of the stories have found their place in this book because they were requested for retelling.

6. Botkin, B. A., ed., *A Treasury of American Folklore* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1944). The stories, legends, tall tales, traditions, ballads, and songs of the American people. The storyteller will find material here for the kindergarten as well as for the older age.

7. Gruenberg, Sidonie Matsner, *Favorite Stories Old and New* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1942). Mrs. Gruenberg has been active in the Child Study Association of America for over thirty years. She served as chairman of their Children's Book Committee for many years. With four children in her own home, she came to know the favorite stories of boys and girls at different age levels. The first part of her book contains stories

about "Real Children and Real Things," "Stories about Animals," and "Stories of Make Believe." These are the stories recommended for early childhood.

8. Jones, J. Morris and Others, ed., *Childcraft* (Chicago: Field Enterprises, 1949). Fourteen volumes. A superb source of stories and story materials for all ages.

* 9. Lindsay, Maud, *The Storyland Tree* (New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Company, 1933). These stories for small children are full of allusions to nature. Very beautiful and "homey" is the story of "Two Little Housekeepers." Especially adapted to children in rural districts.

10. Miller, Mrs. Olive Kennon, ed., *My Book House* (Chicago: Book House for Children, 1951). New edition. Twelve volumes. Especially helpful for those who do not have access to a good public library. The graded stories provide material "at your finger tips." Volume twelve has three very helpful indexes.

11. Smith, Elva Sophronia, and Hazeltine, Alice, and Isabel, comp. *Just for Fun* (New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1948). Humorous stories for all ages.

12. *The Shining Tree and Other Christmas Stories* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1945). Stories by distinguished authors. Suitable for all ages.

13. *Told Under the Green Umbrella* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1947). Favorite stories selected by the Literature Committee of the International Kindergarten Union. Familiar stories such as: "The Three Little Pigs," "The Pancake," "The Old Woman and Her Pig," "The Elves and the Shoemaker," and many others are found here.

14. Committee of Association for Childhood Education, *Told Under the Christmas Tree* (New York: The Mac-

* Out of print.

millan Company, 1948). Stories about Christmas in many lands. Illustrated by Maud and Miska Petersham.

The matter of Bible stories will be discussed more fully in a later chapter. Listed below are a few that are most frequently used with kindergarten children:

The Baby Moses—Exodus 1:1 to 2:10

The Infant Samuel—1 Samuel 1

Birth of Jesus—Matthew 1:18 to 2:12; Luke 2:1–20

The Little Boy Who Gave His Lunch to Jesus—John 6:1–13

Stories of Jesus' Kindness to Others—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

To start you exploring in this field, we have given you samples of stories for this age group. Go afield! Dip into every storybook that comes your way. Perhaps there will be only two or three stories that will appeal to you in a volume. Garner these few and discard the others—for the time being, at least! Upon rereading them you may discover that you like some of the discarded ones. It bears repeating: no matter how beautiful or funny or appropriate a story is, unless it appeals to you, it is not the story for you. Gather about you the stories that have a special appeal to you and then you can make them appealing to others.

THE PRIMARY AGE

There is no exact time when one story interest ends and another begins, because one overlaps the other. However, there is a noticeable change in the child's story interests about the time he enters public school. At about the age of six, the child begins to enjoy the imaginary story. His mind is now ready to roam to long-ago times and far-away places. By means of the "magic carpet," he

can travel to other countries and become acquainted with other peoples.

In contrast to the kindergarten child, who lives in a world of realism, the primary child dwells in the realm of make-believe. This is the period when the little girl likes to dress up in mother's high heel slippers and the little boy likes to play "Indian." No wonder that *Cinderella* appeals to this young lady and that *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* lends enchantment to this young man! For the Primary boy and girl we would suggest:

Fairy stories.—Fairy stories are appealing to the Primary child, especially to girls. Boys accept them more readily, if there is adventure in the tale. As soon as the child's imagination becomes active he is ready for the fairy tale. To him, the characters are masquerading, and this appeals to his "play-like" nature. The animals in the stories become only human beings in disguise.

Educators have not always agreed as to the value of the fairy story. For a period, acting upon a theory that the evil was greater than the good, some would have eradicated it from the child's world. But to do so left barren and waste a most fertile field of imagination and deprived the child of a rich heritage of beauty and satisfying fantasy. Indeed, May Arbuthnot says, "at a certain age children seek these tales, hungering perhaps for that world of universal truth, a world of pure justice, where the wicked never go unpunished and gentle hearts are always rewarded with love and good fortune. This is the world they wish to believe in."¹

Fairy stories can be very beneficial, when the child is taught to differentiate between fact and fancy. They contribute to a child's full development, teaching him the positive values of justice and fair play, of beauty and love,

¹ *Children and Books* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1947), p. 29.

of honesty and decency. They satisfy his innate demand for the punishment of cruelty, greed, and dishonesty and give him a sense of confidence in the reality of a right-thinking, right-acting world. Primaries have a keen sense of justice, and they enjoy the fairy story where evil is punished and good is rewarded.

As one thinks back upon childhood, it is not the actual happenings that come to memory so much as it is the stories of those bygone days. Soon enough reality, with all its harshness and disillusionment, comes to the individual. Let these early years be enriched with the magic and the enchantment of fairy stories where everything is beautiful and good! These early years linger on in the memory for some. Many agree with Kate Douglas Wiggin that, "Some universal spiritual truth underlies the really fine old fairy tale." The desire for them is a deep, normal appetite and should be nourished with the best available stories.

The child's imagination needs to be developed, but he should always recognize the fairy tale as fancy and not fact. Sometimes he will ask, "Was that a true story?" The weaver of magic may reply, "No, but once upon a time people thought it was true," for fairy stories seem to be the explanation of long-ago peoples for many things and for many happenings in their world. Use the old fairy tales that have stood the test of time.

Wonder stories.—Some have characterized the Primary age by the term "curiosity." Children of this age ask "why" and "how" about everything and everybody. These questions can be answered in story form. For this we suggest the stories that make for wonder. True-to-life stories from nature are very acceptable. Wonder stories from the Bible are most effective during this period, for this is the time when children accept the Bible without question.

Stories from real life.—Life's horizons have widened for the Primary child. School has added to his acquaint-

ances, his experiences, and his knowledge. For this reason, he begins to enjoy stories of children of other lands. This opens the way for the broadening of missionary vision. As he learns about the children of other countries he becomes interested in their needs. Many religious leaders have recognized this opportunity and have provided stories suited to the needs of this age.

Listed below are a few of the stories which seem to be acceptable to the Primary child:

Recommended stories

1. "Epaminondas and His Auntie"—from *How to Tell Stories to Children* by Sara Cone Bryant. Boys and girls get many hearty laughs from the absurd experiences of this little Negro boy. A tale for young and old.

2. "Jack and the Beanstalk"—from *English Fairy Tales* by Joseph Jacobs. A story of a stupid Jack who made a silly blunder of swapping the family milk cow for a handful of beans. Nevertheless the magical beans grow a beanstalk that goes up into the sky. When Jack climbs the beanstalk, he finds a bag of gold, a hen that lays golden eggs, and a golden harp. Throughout the fairy tale runs a delightful rhythm.

3. "Lambikin"—from *Indian Fairy Tales* by Joseph Jacobs. A fascinating tale with a familiar refrain.

4. "Rumpelstiltskin"—from *Grimm's Household Stories* by Lucy Crane. A miller takes his daughter to the king's palace, where she is commanded to spin straw into gold. Unable to do so, she begins to weep, but a fairy appears and, for a consideration spins the gold for her. The king decides to make the miller's daughter his wife if she can spin a third room full of gold. For his help on this occasion, the miller's daughter promises the fairy her first child. Only by guessing the riddle of his name is the queen spared the tragedy of separation from her baby.

5. "The Elves and the Shoemaker"—from *Fairy Tales* of the Brothers Grimm. A delightful tale of a poor shoemaker who finds his shoes finished and ready for sale each morning. The shoemaker and his wife decide to hide themselves one night and discover their benefactor. At midnight, two little elves come trooping into the room. Out of gratitude for their service, the wife makes an outfit of clothes for each little elf.

6. "The Elephant's Child"—from Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories*. The insatiable curiosity of the elephant's child gets him into many humorous experiences. A favorite with children.

7. "The Birds' Christmas Carol"—by Kate Douglas Wiggin. A beautiful but sad story of a little lame girl. Suitable for telling at Christmastime. This was the author's first book written to raise money for the Silver Street Kindergarten in San Francisco, the first free kindergarten west of the Rockies.

8. "The Magic Box"—from *The Way of the Storyteller* by Ruth Sawyer. The author relates the story as told to her by an Italian baker in Boston. It has a hidden moral which goes back to the Garden of Eden.

9. "The Pig Brother"—from Laura E. Richards' book *Golden Windows*. An untidy child is sent to visit with his brother, the pig. The child learns his lesson and is glad to return to his room and be a tidy child.

10. "Toads and Diamonds"—from *Fairy Tales* by Charles Perrault. The story is a contrast between two sisters: one, a kindly person; the other, a cross, selfish girl. When the polite girl speaks, pearls and diamonds fall from her lips. When the selfish girl speaks, only toads and snakes come out. The king's son finds the courteous, polite girl and makes her his wife.

11. "The Ugly Duckling"—from *Fairy Tales* by Hans Christian Andersen. The old mother duck could not get

her biggest egg to hatch, so she sat on it a little longer. After a while a monstrous big "duckling" tumbled out. He was queer, ungainly, and ugly. The poor duckling was bitten, pushed about, and made fun of. He went through much privation and misery until one day he saw his image in the water. Then he was overcome with happiness because he realized he was a white swan.

12. "Why the Chimes Rang"—from Raymond MacDonald Alden's book *Why the Chimes Rang and Other Stories*. On his way to the great church, Pedro finds a poor woman in the snow. Sending Little Brother on to the Cathedral, Pedro remains with the unfortunate woman. As Little Brother lays Pedro's little piece of silver on the altar, the chimes ring out loud and clear. A beautiful Christmas story.

Book list

1. Alden, Raymond MacDonald, *Why the Chimes Rang and Other Stories* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1908). Eleven beautiful stories that have much religious value.

2. Andersen, Hans Christian, *Fairy Tales* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936). Perhaps the best known of Andersen's fairy tales is "The Ugly Duckling." Some say that it is a mirror of his early life. Every child has a right to hear Andersen's "Thumbelina," "The Nightingale," and "The Princess and the Pea."

3. Bailey, Carolyn Sherwin, *Candle for Your Cake* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1952). Birthday stories of twenty-four famous men and women. Among the number are Abraham Lincoln, George Washington Carver, Helen Keller, Clara Barton, and Dwight Eisenhower.

4. Bailey, Carolyn Sherwin, *Finnegan II, His Nine Lives* (New York: The Viking Press, 1953). Stories of Finnie, an alley cat, who was adopted by a small boy and

found a home on a New England farm. Delightful stories of adventure in which Finnegan uses his nine lives and embarks on his tenth.

5. Beston, Henry, *Fairy Tales* (New York: Aladdin Books, 1952). A collection of delightful stories. Included are "The Shepherd of Clouds," "The Master Mariner," "The Lost Half-Hour," "The City of Winter Sleep," and "The Brave Grenadier."

* 6. Bryant, Sara Cone, *Best Stories to Tell to Children* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1912). Stories that are especially adapted to telling. These are the chosen few that proved to be the lasting favorites. Included in the book are: "The Little Match Girl," "How Brother Rabbit Fooled the Whale," "The Cat and the Parrot," and others.

7. Child Study Association of America, *Holiday Storybook* (New York: The Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1952). Anthology of holiday stories. Narratives of how children celebrate American holidays and festivals.

8. Colum, Padriac, ed., *Arabian Nights* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923). Author or authors unknown. A collection of stories centering around an ancient sultan of Arabia. Perhaps the best known in this collection are: "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," "Sinbad, the Sailor," and "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp."

9. Dalglish, Alice, *Christmas, A Book of Stories Old and New* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951). Emphasis is here placed on the Bible story of Christmas and poems which relate to it. The usual Santa Claus stories give way to the more realistic stories concerned with giving.

10. Dalglish, Alice, *The Courage of Sarah Noble* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954). Stories of an eight-year-old girl in the pioneer days of Connecticut. The ad-

* Out of print.

ventures of Sarah illustrate the truth of her father's understanding statement "To be afraid and to be brave is the best courage of all."

11. Davis, Mary Gould, comp., *A Baker's Dozen* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1930). These stories have stood the "test of the children's interest and approval." They were told to the children of New York as they came to storyhour at the public libraries. The wording of the stories lends charm to their telling.

12. Deutsch, Babette and Yarmolinsky, Abraham, *Tales of Faraway Folk* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952). Ten short folk tales from Russia, Central Asia, Karelia, and Lithuania.

13. Dillingham, Elizabeth Thompson and Emerson, Adelle Powers, *"Tell It Again" Stories* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1911). A collection of stories that have proved to be favorites with boys and girls. There are seasonal stories such as "A Hallowe'en Story," "Santa Claus' Helpers," "Elaine's Valentine," "The First Flag of the United States," and others.

14. Harper, Wilhelmina, comp., *Easter Chimes* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1942). Stories for Easter and the spring season written by Mabel Leigh Hunt, Joyce Kilmer, Laura E. Richards, Carolyn Bailey, Katherine Dunlap Cather, and others. Included are eleven stories that are especially suited to younger children.

15. Harper, Wilhelmina, comp., *Merry Christmas to You* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1935). Another book of Christmas stories which includes Beatrix Potter, Ruth Sawyer, Eugene Field, Oscar Wilde, and others.

16. Harper, Wilhelmina, comp., *The Gunniwolf and Other Merry Tales* (New York: David McKay Co., 1936). A compilation of stories which includes, among others, "Why Pigs Have Curly Tails," "The Gunniwolf," Carl Sandburg's "How to Tell the Corn Fairies," and Howard

Pyle's "The Three Little Pigs and the Ogre." The print is large enough for children's reading.

* 17. Holbrook, Florence, *The Book of Nature Myths* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1902). These stories present the naïve explanations of the phenomena of nature which were accepted by primitive peoples. They appeal to children who wonder about these same mysteries. Some of the titles are: "Why the Serpent Sheds His Skin," "Why the Bear Has a Short Tail," "Why the Hoofs of the Deer are Split," and "Why the Aspen Leaves Tremble."

18. Justus, May, *Children of the Great Smoky Mountains* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1952). This understanding author gives us sixteen short stories of Tennessee mountain children. You will find folk songs in many of the stories.

19. Kipling, Rudyard, *Just So Stories* (Garden City N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1952). Illustrated by Nicolas Mordvinoff. A charmingly told book of humorous stories.

20. Lang, Andrew, *Blue Fairy Book* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1948). This is one of a series of translations and collections of fairy tales from many lands. Among others, one finds the familiar stories: "Little Red Riding Hood," "Cinderella," "Rumpelstiltskin," "Hansel and Gretel," "Snow-White and Rose-Red," and "Jack, the Giant Killer."

21. Lang, Andrew, *Red Fairy Book* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1948). A second of the series of Lang's fairy tale collection. Three familiar stories in the book are: "Jack and the Beanstalk," "Snowdrop," and "The Golden Goose."

22. Lenski, Lois, *We Live in the South* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1952). Short stories about children of the South.

* Out of print.

23. Milne, Alan Alexander, *Once On a Time* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922). The author tells us that he has written the book "for those, young and old, who like the things which I like." The stories are charmingly written and lend themselves to telling.

24. Newell, Hope, *The Little Old Woman Who Used Her Head* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1935). "Once upon a time there was a little old woman, who lived in a little yellow house with a blue door and two blue window boxes." The little old woman was very poor, but because she used her head she was able to make ends meet. The delightful stories tell how she used her head.

25. Odell, Mary C., *Another Story Shop* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1947). The author tells us that these stories were written for her Primary church group, for her own children, some for children's periodicals, and some just for fun! They are listed for special days and occasions. Though they are brief, they meet a need of this age.

26. Olcott, Frances Jenkins, *Good Stories for Great Holidays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1914). The book is planned especially for storytelling, since, as the author says, "that is a delightful way of arousing a gladsome holiday spirit." Included in the volume are one hundred and twenty stories for seventeen different holidays.

27. Perrault's *Fairy Tales*, Gustave Doré Album; all the French fairy tales by Charles Perrault (New York: Didier Publishers, 1946). Perrault was one of the first to write down the old fairy tales. Among others in this volume we find the familiar stories: "Blue Beard," "Puss in Boots," and "Beauty and the Beast."

* 28. Richards, Laura E., *The Golden Windows*. The daughter of Julia Ward Howe (author of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic") has given boys and girls some

* Out of print.

"golden" stories which were written out of her rich life experiences. They were first told to her own children.

29. Richardson, Margaret Stimson, *Seven Little Piffles-sniffs* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1952). Ten excellent bedtime stories about a family of nine, pa and ma and seven children.

30. Sandburg, Carl, *Rootabaga Stories* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922). Illustrated by Maud and Miska Petersham. A book of nonsense tales, charmingly told. The second story, "How They Bring Back the Village of Cream Puffs When the Wind Blows It Away" is a good example. Adults will love it too!

31. Wiggin, Kate Douglas and Smith, Archibald, eds. *Tales of Laughter* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1908). In this collection are the folk and fairy tales that bring laughter to boys and girls. Here we find the familiar stories "Why the Sea Is Salt," "The Pancake," "The Lambikin" and others.

32. Wilde, Oscar, *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913). This book was published when the author was thirty-two years old. The stories impress us with the truth that kindness and generosity are good and that selfishness and cruelty are evil. "The Selfish Giant," "The Young King," "The Happy Prince," and "The Fisherman and His Sou" all teach this lesson.

It is difficult to select stories for this age group as over against those for the little child or those for the older child. Many librarians do not attempt to make the distinction. For instance, Mary Gould Davis and Joan Vatssek compiled such a list in 1943, entitled "Stories"—a list of stories to tell and to read aloud. The storyteller will find this annotated list of stories most helpful.

Begin with the stories and books suggested in this chap-

ter—if they appeal to you. Test them with your boys and girls of middle childhood. Hours of browsing in the children's library, observing the young readers and conversing with the obliging librarian (if you catch her with free time!), will bring rich rewards—rewards in wisdom of choosing and then in joy of telling stories to these “middle-years” children!

IV Choosing the Story

Junior, Adolescent



THE JUNIOR AGE

NO MORE RECEPTIVE group can be found for the storyteller than the nine–twelve-year-old boy and girl. So great is their love for heroes that these years have been called the Heroic Period. The boy and girl are no longer children, content to dwell in a land of fancy. They are

emerging into a world of realism inhabited by real-life heroes whose days are filled with adventure. At this age, stories told to boys and girls can challenge them to high-minded living and may influence lives for future service. This is the time for rich experiences with literature.

The Junior is now entering a period when he is no longer content to use a magic carpet and sail to places of enchantment. He wants to launch out and to become part of real adventure. The fighting instinct becomes more evident, and the boy especially craves danger and daring. He may not enter into these dramatic experiences personally, but he may experience them vicariously through literature.

Hero stories.—Heroes, for the Junior, must be real flesh and blood people who excel in the physical realm. Their stories must be filled with action, recounting real "do or die" deeds of physical prowess. The heroic stories of the Old Testament have a mighty appeal for this age.

Perhaps no other age, unless it is the age of adolescence, has been so exploited by the commercial world. Taking advantage of the Junior's thirst for adventure, money-minded, unscrupulous writers have invented the superman comic, the crime magazine, and the cheap type of heroism found at most newsstands. Reading such degrading material, listening to pernicious tales on the radio, and seeing vicious movies, have led to crime and lawlessness among boys and girls of this age.

One might just as well attempt to change the course of nature as to try to satisfy the craving of Juniors for adventure with the matter-of-fact story of everyday life enjoyed by Beginners or the fairy story adored by Primaries! The Juniors want heroes, and heroes they must have! Along with the rich stories of heroes from the children's classics, why not give them the heroes of the Bible: Samson, David, Daniel, Paul, and others? The Bible is the Junior's great storehouse of real heroes.

Stories of adult life.—The nine- to twelve-year-old is interested in the activities and achievements of adult life. He admires older people and wants to be like them. His strong desire is to grow up and do as his hero does, so he looks forward to the day when he will be an adult. He also likes stories about horses, dogs, hunting, fishing, adventure, and exploration. This realistic period spans the years between the age of the Primary's strong imagination and the age of the Adolescent's strong feeling.

Biography and historical narrative.—Biographical and historical stories appeal to him. But care should be taken that the historical characters are given in such a way that they will not in later years be dethroned in his eyes. Children must necessarily realize that the characters were human but that they lived above the standards of their day. Give these sensitive children stories of brave, noble men and women—people they can safely emulate. Lives of missionaries appeal to Juniors.

Epic stories.—Epic stories, too, have a definite place in the life of the nine- to twelve-year-old. Robin Hood is a prime favorite with boys of this age, and they follow with delight the adventures of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Tell the great epics in sequence. Giving a section from one may whet the appetite for more, and boys and girls may thus be led to read them for themselves.

The Junior boy's or girl's love for stories does not diminish, if it has been kindled in earlier years, provided the storyteller offers the type of tale this age craves. The following illustrate the type that appeals to this age.

Recommended stories

1. "Dan'l Boone" from *Yankee Doodle's Cousins* by Anne Malcolmson. The story of a great American hero who was an explorer, an Indian fighter, and a bear fighter.

2. "How Robin Hood Became an Outlaw" and "How

He Met with Little John" from *Some Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* by Howard Pyle. The author uses words that are adapted to the storyteller. These stories should arouse the curiosity of boys and girls and cause them to read the entire book.

3. "Powder and Arms" from *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson. This story has much conversation, which helps to point up the characters. A very fine way to introduce Stevenson's exciting classic.

Book list

1. Alcott, Louisa M., *Little Women* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1868). Recent editions are very attractive. Especially appealing to pre-adolescent girls. Stories of a warm, loving family group who struggle with poverty and problems. Always the March family maintains a sense of humor, and the four girls seem to be "real" people.

2. *American Boy* (periodical), *American Boy Adventure Stories* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1952). Sixteen outstanding hero stories taken from the periodical *American Boy*. Among the titles are "They Kept the Flag There," "Horses and Men," and "The Man on Stormrift Mountain."

3. Andrews, Roy Chapman, ed., *My Favorite Stories of the Great Outdoors* (New York: Greystone Press). Anthology of short stories about animals and things of nature. A real treasure for storytellers and nature lovers.

4. Bailey, Carolyn Sherwin, *Children of the Handcrafts* (New York: The Viking Press, 1935). Stories of boys and girls who worked with their hands. Some of the stories tell of famous craftsmen.

* 5. Baldwin, James, *Fifty Famous Rides and Riders*. These stories are gathered from many centuries and many

* Out of print.

countries. Longfellow's "Ride of Paul Revere" (poetry), Washington Irving's "The Schoolmaster and the Headless Horseman," Jonathan Swift's "How Gulliver Rode to Lilliput," and Rudyard Kipling's "The Ride of the Colonel's Son" (poetry) are found in this volume.

6. Bowman, James Cloyd, *John Henry, The Rambling Ulysses* (Chicago: Albert Whitman and Co., 1942). Folk tales of the South about a giant of a Negro.

7. Bowman, James Cloud, *Pecos Bill* (Chicago: Albert Whitman and Co., 1950). American folklore from the open range country of the Southwest, gleaned from the annals of the campfire and the round-up.

8. Carpenter, Frances, *Wonder Tales of Horses and Heroes* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1952). A collection of horse stories from many countries. The book is well illustrated with pictures that are spread across two pages.

9. Chase, Richard, ed., *The Jack Tales* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1943). Folk tales of the southern mountain farmers. The adventures of an Appalachian giant killer.

10. Clemens, Samuel Langhorne, *Tom Sawyer* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1876). The author relates stories from his own boyhood life on the Mississippi River. Tom's escapades give juniors cold chills! Along with the excitement and humor we find a boy's splendid code: honesty, dependability, and kindness. A classic for boys!

11. Collodi, Carlo, *Pinocchio, The Adventures of a Puppet* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951). The author grew up in Florence, Italy, and was as mischievous in school as his famous and beloved character. The exciting pranks and adventures of Pinocchio give the nine-twelve-year-olds a vicarious experience which they need.

12. Commager, Henry Steele, ed., *The St. Nicholas* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1948). From the pages

of the *St. Nicholas Magazine*, covering all the years of the periodical's existence, come these stories. Reviewed and passed on by two children—ages ten and fourteen. The editor says to us, "Here it is, the best of St. Nick."

13. Daugherty, James, *Daniel Boone* (New York, The Viking Press, 1939). This story of the great American pioneer gives an accurate picture of midwestern frontier life. These are exciting stories of an exciting life. Received the Newberry Medal—award given each year for the best in children's literature published in the United States.

14. Defoe, Daniel, *Robinson Crusoe* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1719). Supposedly based on fact, this adventure story has been a prime favorite since it was published in 1719. The narrative tells how a shipwrecked Robinson Crusoe maintains life on a lonely island.

15. Duvoisin, Roger A., *And There Was America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1938). Stories of early explorers of America. Told in language that will appeal to older boys and girls.

16. Egermeier, Elsie E., *Girl's Stories of Great Women* (Indiana: The Warner Press, 1947). Concerning the purpose for writing her book, the author says: "That you may be inspired through reading these stories to help your sisters on to better things." The list includes stories about a missionary, Helen Keller, Fanny Crosby, Jenny Lind, Clara Barton, Louisa May Alcott, and others. The incidents appeal to Junior girls.

17. Fenner, Phyllis Reid, ed., *Crack of the Bat* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1952). Eight exciting stories about baseball.

18. Fenner, Phyllis Reid, comp., *Ghosts, Ghosts, Ghosts* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1952). Sixteen spooky stories that will bring thrills to boys and girls. The illustrations are excellent.

19. Fenner, Phyllis Reid, comp., *Yankee Doodle* (New

York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1952). Eleven stories of American heroes who lived during the period between the Revolutionary War and the Civil War.

20. Forbes, Esther and Ward, Lynn, *America's Paul Revere* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1946). An outstanding juvenile biography.

21. Harper, Wilhelmina, ed., *The Harvest Feast* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1938). This is an anthology of stories of the first Thanksgiving days: the boys and girls who came over on the Mayflower, of Indian children, and of pioneer boys and girls. Also, there are stories of a more recent day such as Eugene Fields': "Ezra's Thanksgiving Out West."

22. Hawthorne, Hildegard, *Give Me Liberty* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1945). A biography of Patrick Henry which gives an exciting picture of colonial times. The author shows us Patrick Henry as a boy, as a lawyer, and as a statesman.

23. Hazeltine, Alice Isabel, comp., *Children's Stories to Read or Tell* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1949). Here are thirty-seven stories grouped according to subject matter: stories of learning to live, stories of ancient wisdom, stories of enchantment and adventure, stories of courage and kindness, and stories of famous men and women.

24. Jagendorf, Moritz, *Upstate Downstate* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1949). Folk tales from five middle Atlantic states. These stories were told to the compiler as he traveled from shack to mansion throughout the states.

25. Jagendorf, Moritz, *New England Bean Pot* (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1948). American folk tales from the New England states. The author's first book of folk stories as he began his folk-tale journey around the United States. There are forty-six folk tales taken from the home of American storytelling.

26. Lawson, Robert, *They Were Strong and Good* (New York: The Viking Press, 1940). Stories of the author's grandparents. Emphasis is placed on our fine American heritage. This book received the Caldecott award for juvenile book illustration in 1941.

27. Malcolmson, Anne B., *Yankee Doodle's Cousins* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1941). In this volume you will find, among others, stories about Captain Kidd, Dan'l Boone, Paul Bunyan ("How Ol' Paul Changed the Map of America"—one of the best of the Paul Bunyan stories), and Johnny Appleseed. The author has collected from the fund of American tradition and folk literature these stories for ten-year-olds. Her purpose is to stimulate pride in America.

* 28. Matthews, Basil, *Livingstone, the Pathfinder*. Some of the greatest heroes of all time are missionaries. Livingstone is one of the most famous of all. Basil Matthews writes understandingly of this early missionary to Africa.

29. McCormick, Dell J., *Paul Bunyan Swings His Axe* (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, 1952). Tall tales of a hero of the American Northwest. These tales give a life-story of the legendary lumberman.

30. Pyle, Howard, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951). The best version for boys and girls. One of the most exciting narratives in all literature. Robin Hood's sense of humor, his idea of fair play, and his roguish tricks make him an appealing hero to Junior boys and girls.

31. Salten, Felix, *Bambi* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1928). The author was a lover of animals. This is the story of a deer who understands much as humans do. A favorite with boys and girls of many countries.

* Out of print.

32. Spyri, Johanna H., *Heidi* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1948). One of the favorite stories of boys and girls. Heidi goes up into the Swiss Alps to live with her grandfather. The stories tell how she won her way into the hearts of the mountain people.

33. Stevenson, Robert Louis, *Treasure Island* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924). One of the best adventure stories of all literature. It was written for the author's young step-son when he asked for "something interesting"!

Suggested Bible stories

David and Goliath—1 Samuel 17

Daniel in the Lions' Den—Daniel 6

Joshua Captures Jericho—Joshua 6:1-20

THE AGE OF ADOLESCENCE

Many books on storytelling do not discuss its relation to the adolescent age, because some believe that young people have outgrown the appeal of storytelling. Evidence is to the contrary. Not only have adolescents not outgrown its appeal, but storytelling has an even greater significance as a channel for imparting truth to them. The art of storytelling may be employed in teaching, in devotional messages, in church organizations, in summer camps. It may be used effectively in recreational programs or in any situation as long as the age characteristics are recognized. Although reading habits have become rather well established by this time, there remains a real need and a keen desire for the related story, especially in group situations. The religious leader, rather than the mother, becomes the popular storyteller at this age.

The awakening of sex comes during this period, and it is upon this interest that the unscrupulous writer capitalizes in his salacious stories. If stories of romance and chiv-

alry, of high idealism and loyalty to principle, are given to young people, they will turn away from the cheap and immoral story.

This is the time for the best of romance stories, but the purely love element should be delayed until later adolescence when the emotional life is a little more mature. Stories in which people sacrifice self for principle and are willing to suffer for loyalty to moral conviction; stories of heroism in the home, of everyday, struggling lives where ideals and unselfish service to others are portrayed, should be provided along with those about warriors, explorers, missionaries, and characters of renown.

The poetic movement enters with the beginning of adolescence, and the younger teen-ager is now ready for stories of high ideals and deep emotions. Whereas the Junior thrills with the physical prowess of the hero, the adolescent is stirred by his spiritual qualities. He dwells more in the realm of the abstract. He is interested not only in what the hero did but also in what the hero felt.

If the teller of tales is to interest young people, he must understand their characteristics and choose his story to fit their particular needs. Only a few of the outstanding characteristics are listed in this discussion.

Consciousness of individuality and sense of power is developing.—The adolescent boy or girl desires to be recognized as a distinct personality. In later adolescence, the youth attains physical maturity and his brain reaches its maximum size. Because of this rapid growth, especially in the earlier years, this period is characterized by a restlessness and many times a contradiction in ideals and purposes. The desire to be and to do is present, but the power of self-control and self-direction has not kept pace with the growing intensity of impulses. Much patience and wise, unobtrusive guidance is needed. Choice of reading can be influenced by proper stories well told. The story told, as

well as the story read, can help to build high ideals and influence character.

Social life is now more attractive to the adolescent.—Interest in the opposite sex is awakening. Wholesome relationships between young men and young women should be encouraged, because of the benefit to each. In the earlier period, this fellowship is best cultivated in the group—each needs to have many friends. Stories of romance that show the true meaning of love, that picture manhood and womanhood at its best, should be given to these young people. Stories of pure love help to form habits of moral cleanliness and to encourage right boy-girl relationships.

Adolescence is a period of high idealism.—This is the time when dreams are dreamed and emotions are stirred. Often, young people are impatient with adult imperfections and become critical and sometimes even cynical. Stories of men facing death for a principle, suffering for a cause, or remaining true to a trust—even at great cost—meet the need of this age. Through stories of high-minded romance and unselfish love the religious leader can stimulate the higher ambitions and aspirations of youth and prepare him to meet the crises of this turbulent period.

During the period of adolescence life choices are made.—Not only the choice of a life-companion, but also the decision as to lifework comes to the young man and young woman. Within everyone is the need to be challenged to altruistic service. This can be done many times through a story. During the departmental assembly on Sunday morning and Sunday evening, at the close of a party in connection with a devotional period, at the campfire service of a summer assembly or a student retreat, well-chosen stories, skilfully told, can make a lasting impression upon the lives of our young people.

Even as the Bible is a storehouse of stories for other age

groups, so it is for the adolescent. However, a different type of story should be chosen. Instead of "David and Goliath," the young person is interested in David the father, mourning for his son Absalom. Biblical stories of romance, such as Isaac and Rebecca, and Ruth and Boaz, appeal to the adolescent. The life of Jesus of Nazareth, told in sequence, is the most sublime story that can be given to this age.

Embedded in the pages of literature and the daily newspaper, from incidents in everyday life, material can be found for stories for the adolescent age. As the storyteller comes to understand the deeper, inner life of young people, he will become more discerning in his selection of stories.

Suggested books

1. Becker, May Lamberton, ed., *Under Twenty* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1932). A collection of stories about girls under twenty. The editor likes girls, and she has provided these true-to-life stories which describe them.

2. Cooper, James Fenimore, *The Last of the Mohicans* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1857). The stories tell of life among the Indians and frontiersmen. The time is during the French and Indian Wars.

3. Dickens, Charles, *A Christmas Carol* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1950). The story of Scrooge, a skinflint and a hard master, who enters into the spirit of Christmas, after he has been visited by three spirits. Perhaps the best loved of all Christmas stories.

4. Eaton, Jeanette, *Leader by Destiny* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938). Biography of George Washington written especially for teen-agers. The author shows Washington's affection for his wife Martha and for her children. The stories will help young people to know

Washington as a very human man, who inspired confidence in others.

5. Forbes, Esther, *Johnny Tremain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1943). One of the best of American historical fiction. A story of a silversmith's apprentice and his stirring experiences which are a part of Boston's pre-revolutionary activities. The stories make the colonists and red-coats come alive. This book received the 1944 Newberry award.

6. Grenfell, Sir Wilfred, *Adrift on an Ice-Pan* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909). Autobiography of a missionary to Labrador.

7. Harper, Wilhelmina, *For Love of Country* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1942). Stories of young patriots, written for young people.

8. Hazeltine, Alice Isabel, and Smith, Elva Sophronia, *Easter Book of Legends and Stories* (New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., 1947). An excellent collection of stories. Some of the classifications are: The First Easter, The Waking Year, and a Lesson of Faith. A wise choice for family, church, and school.

9. Hazeltine, Alice Isabel, and Smith, Elva Sophronia, eds., *Stories of Love* (New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., 1949). This collection includes short stories about romance, as well as poems and plays.

10. Hazeltine, Alice Isabel, comp., *Selected Stories for Teen-Agers* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1952). An anthology of short stories from a variety of sources. Includes biographical incidents and historical events.

11. Jackson, Helen Hunt, *Ramona* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1939). A story of the sad state of California Indians and their treatment by government officials.

12. Lamb, Charles and Mary, *Tales from Shakespeare* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1950). A good way to introduce Shakespeare to young people.

13. Larsen, Egon, *Men Who Changed the World* (New York: Roy Pubs, 1952). Amusing incidents from the lives of twelve inventors. Among others you will find: Alexander G. Bell, Thomas Edison, Wilbur and Orville Wright, and Henry Ford.

14. Lindbergh, Anne Morrow, *North to the Orient* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1935). Like her mother, Anne Morrow Lindbergh is poetic, and it shows in the account of her first long flying trip with her famous husband. The reader catches a glimpse of the author's sense of humor as well as her courage.

15. London, Jack, *The Call of the Wild* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1912). A story of the far North. A dog leaves civilization and becomes the leader of a wolf pack.

16. Meigs, Cornelia, *Invincible Louisa* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1933). Biography of the author of *Little Women*, Louisa May Alcott. The writer tells of the poverty of the Alcott family and of Louisa's efforts to earn money for their support. This book won the Newberry award.

17. O'Hara, Mary, *My Friend Flicka* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1944). A beautiful story of a horse.

18. Paine, Albert Bigelow, *Boy's Life of Mark Twain* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1916). A close associate of Mark Twain's, the author has given a vivid picture of his friend's life.

19. Seventeen (periodical) *Nineteen from Seventeen* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1952). Anthology of stories that deal with problems of young people. All were published in "Seventeen" within the last six years.

20. Taggard, Ernestine, *Here We Are* (New York: Robert M. McBride and Co., 1941). Twenty of the best stories taken from Scholastic magazine. Written for high-school age young people.

* 21. Tyler, A. C., *Twenty-Four Unusual Stories*.

Myths that appeal to younger adolescents. Especially appealing is the story of "The Curse of Echo."

22. Wilder, Laura Ingalls, *These Happy Golden Years* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1943). The author was born in a log cabin and moved to Dakota territory in a covered wagon. On the prairie she met her husband. *These Happy Golden Years* tells about their life together.

* Out of print.

V

Preparing the Story



THE PREPARATION of a story, as well as the painting of a picture, requires real effort and should extend over a long period of time. Never memorize a story. Make it yours by contemplation and assimilation; let the words be your own, except where there are certain unusual or rhythmical phrases that need to be memorized. A memorized story appears to be a dramatic reading, whereas informal telling lends added charm.

After the story has been selected, read it slowly, over and over again. Concentrate on the reading, giving the imagination free reign to picture each character and incident. When the narrative begins to live for you, put your book aside and let the story ripen. A good story is like a fruit cake, the older it grows, the richer it becomes!

While going about the tasks of the day, the storyteller

may live over again the incidents of his story as the pictures are recalled to his mind. Check with the printed page to see if the imagination has retained accurate pictures of the tale that is to be told.

The story must live for the teller if he is to make it live for his listeners. He must take the skeleton from the printed page and work with it until it becomes a living, pulsing thing—so vivid that the mechanics of preparation are hidden from his hearers in the spontaneous magic of the story!

HOW TO PROCEED

Perhaps a few suggestions as to procedure of preparation may prove helpful to those inexperienced in the art of storytelling.

1. *Learn the plot of the story.* Read it over and think it through until you are thoroughly familiar with the incidents. Be sure that you know all the links that connect the events.

2. *Live with the characters* until they become real. This is where the "ripening" process, previously mentioned, comes into play. A storybook character must become a living character if he is to interest your listeners. Imprint your mind with the image of each character.

3. *Envision the environment* of the story. Sketching scenes on paper and charting the movements of characters will help. If the story is of another land and people, you will need to study the geography of that country and the customs of the people.

The storyteller must know more than the bare outline of his story. If he is to hold his audience, he must give the story out of his "over-flow." He must become saturated with his story.

4. *Analyze the story.* Divide it into scenes. Pick out the four component parts and study them carefully.

Introduction.—The introduction tests the ability of the storyteller. The introduction should be direct and should present something familiar to the hearers. It sets the pace for the remainder of the story and creates atmosphere. Interest must be aroused in the first sentence; characters are ushered in and action begins. The storyteller does not waste time with detailed description or lengthy explanations.

Learn the exact wording of the introduction and the conclusion. When the introduction is memorized, it lessens the fright or self-consciousness of the amateur. A memorized conclusion prevents the inexperienced storyteller from going on and on with the story, letting it run down to an anticlimax.

For the inexperienced teller, the introduction should be given in narrative form, such as "once upon a time," "in the high and far-off times, O best beloved," or "a long time ago." Dialogue in the introduction is very difficult for the novice.

Margaret Eggleston tells us that the introduction answers three questions: Who? When? and Where? The introduction should be given careful thought and preparation because it makes the first impression for the storyteller. A Junior boy, after hearing the first sentence of a story, turned away disgustedly as he remarked, "Aw, I don' wanta hear that—it's sissy stuff!" With the introduction, it is important to remember, you either capture your listeners or you lose them.

Body of the story.—With the introduction, the storyteller *reaches* his audience, and with the body of the story, he *holds* his audience. The body of the story contains a series of closely connected events leading to a climax. There should be no digression or regression, but the story should get on with the action, connecting each event with the preceding and the following events.

Climax.—The climax is the most important part of the story, for it makes the deepest impression upon the listeners. When the story reaches its highest point of interest, the storyteller has arrived at the climax. It should hold the surprise element and should be dramatically told. It has imbedded in it the kernel of truth. The climax is the purpose for which the story has been told.

Conclusion.—After the climax, the story immediately comes to a close. Sometimes a sentence is all that is needed—seldom ever more than a paragraph. The storyteller must never add a moral. If the story is well told, the listeners already will have received the moral. The conclusion should leave the listeners with minds at rest and a deep sense of satisfaction. The conclusion is where the story “lets go,” as: “That’s all there is about him, I guess.”

5. *Write out your story.* Having obtained the framework of the story you are now ready to write it out, just as you plan to give it. This is the test of whether or not the story has become your own. Writing it out is one of the best ways to impress it upon your memory.

6. *Practice your story.* After the study and preparation has been completed, the time has come for the student to practice his story. Center the mind upon the scenes and the characters and tell it to an imaginary audience. Tell it over and over. If a child or group of children is available tell it to them. Doubtless, you will see the necessity for reviewing and again thinking through the story. This practice telling gives you confidence and skill. One would not think of sharing a musical number with his friends without first practicing it. Neither should a storyteller attempt to give to others a beautiful piece of literature without first practicing it.

Anyone can tell stories—provided he is willing to pay the price of preparation. The art of storytelling requires much time and effort, but it brings rich rewards!

THE STORYTELLER

A discussion of the preparation of the story would be incomplete without consideration of the storyteller. For it is the teller—his personality, his native ability, his spirituality—that counts for most in storytelling. The feeling with which he tells the story has much to do with the impression that is made. Because it is interpreted by a human personality, the story told can be more effective than the story read.

His personality.—Many qualities enter into the storyteller's personality. He must have understanding—an intelligent sympathetic response to his listeners. He must be as one with his hearers. This understanding must also include a deep appreciation, akin to reverence, for the art which he uses. He must recognize the art of storytelling as a means of spiritual enrichment.

Another quality of the teller should be enthusiasm. A radiant personality attracts people. Needless to say, good health is necessary to enthusiasm and vigor. Never tell a story while you are tired—if you can avoid it. Give thorough preparation to the story far enough in advance that you can find time for a moment of relaxation before the telling of it.

The storyteller must have a healthy, vigorous body if he is to be at his best and must enter into the story with all his heart. He must see the beauty and sense the joy of the story he is telling.

Personality grows richer as love for others becomes stronger, as one gives himself more fully in service, and as ideals reach higher.

His native ability.—Although preparation and experience have much to do with the power of the storyteller, native ability does constitute a factor in this age-old art. The voice is the instrument by which the teller of tales

paints his word-picture. Many people do not have a pleasing voice, but most people can cultivate one. Ruth Sawyer suggests three requirements: it must be well pitched; it must be flexible and not monotonous; there must be good breath control.¹

Reading aloud is a fine way to cultivate a musical voice. The old rule of voice culture is an excellent one: "Read first in your natural pitch of voice, then in a light whisper, then in a loud whisper." Practice this for half an hour a day, giving special attention to expression and modulation. At different rates of speed, read alliterative words, such as:

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

These exercises should give better articulation and flexibility of the tongue.

Along with the voice, one's personal appearance must be considered along with the matter of native ability. Even without natural beauty, the storyteller can be charming in manner and attractive in dress. Clothes can give the illusion of beauty. Becoming and attractive attire can go a long way toward achieving a pleasing personality. Sometimes a costume, fitting to the story, can lend enchantment. Always remove the hat and coat.

The soul life.—More important than personality or native ability is the spirituality of the storyteller. If one is to stir his listeners to the depths, he must possess a deep and abiding soul life. Ideals embodied in living form can reinforce ideals portrayed in story form. Christian culture does not come from books, but from association and kinship with the Divine. Spiritual depth gives freedom and a

¹ "How to Tell a Story" (Chicago: F. E. Compton & Company), p. 4.

joyous expectancy to the storyteller, and this spiritual substance is shared with his hearers.

In summarizing, these statements should be applied to the true weaver of tales:

1. He should possess a deep urge to tell stories. He must be willing to fail at first—if by that failure he can learn to be a better storyteller.

2. He must develop spiritual awareness.

3. He must cultivate a listening ear—listening to his own voice, listening to the voices of others, and listening to the voice of Nature.

With this inner development and outer preparation, storytelling becomes a mission—a means of making life more abundant, of bringing contentment and laughter (if only for a brief time) to faces, sometimes grown old before their day.

VI Telling the Story



AFTER THOROUGH PREPARATION has been made, one is ready to pass on the “fairy gold” of the story. The teller has something special to share with his listeners for the experiences of his story-book characters are experiences through which he, too, has lived.

The telling of the story is a test of its value to the listener. A story may be ever so fine, but, if poorly told, it loses its appeal. To tell a story rightly is to share a work of art, and this desire to share must possess the storyteller. One may know the story and not feel it. The storyteller must have a genuine appreciation for his story and his listeners if he is to realize empathy with those who listen, or he is doomed to failure.

Although every artist perfects his own technique, perhaps a few suggestions from experienced storytellers will aid the novice in the art of storytelling.

Plan for atmosphere.—Many times the setting can add to the atmosphere: around an open fire, in the quiet of the evening time; on a lake shore at sunset; on a mountain-top at sunrise—these are the unusual settings that can lend enchantment to story-time. Although such settings are not always available to everyone, most of us can choose a time and place that provide a proper background. Improvised backgrounds are possible to all of us and should fit in with the story to be told. An Indian blanket hung on the wall, with Indian rugs on which to sit, and an Indian costume for the storyteller add to the attractiveness of Indian myths.

For many stories and many occasions, such background is neither practical nor desirable. During these informal story-times, however, the storyteller can create his own atmosphere. He should have his listeners near, if possible. This is especially helpful in telling stories to children. Physical nearness, for them, is essential to mental nearness. Small groups are better than large groups, for the storyteller can better meet individual needs in the small group. The semicircle has been suggested as a pleasant grouping, with the teller in the center, facing his hearers so that he can see them and they can all see him.

Project an effective introduction.—When the group has assembled and each individual appears to be comfortable, you are ready for the story to be introduced. Looking them straight in the eyes, with a facial expression indicative of the type of tale to be told, you should pause long enough to create an air of expectancy. Never attempt to talk above the noise of a group. Let your tone of voice be such that the listeners will not have to strain but will need to be attentive in order to hear.

Just before you start the introductory sentence, bring the characters of the story in brief review before your mind's eye. This will put you in the mood for the story;

it will bring a gleam to your eye or a smile to the corners of your mouth. You are now ready to introduce your characters. Introduce your story briefly, and let the action begin at once.

Lose yourself in your story.—Thorough preparation makes this possible. As the story progresses, you will be thinking of nothing except the narrative and the eager faces of your listeners.

Keep the characters and events ever before your mind's eye if you wish your hearers to see them. *You* must see what you say. Enjoy your story—it will cause your face to light up and your voice to be more animated.

Become one with your listeners. Do not talk down to them or up to them. Try for a direct, unaffected manner. Tell the story as if it were a personal experience.

Throw off self-consciousness by plunging into the story and bending all your energies to the communication of an experience—a sharing with your listeners. Although it may be unconscious on the part of the storyteller, affectation is an effort to exhibit oneself.

Once you have plunged into the story, keep the events moving continuously. Do not stop to give lengthy descriptions. Never turn back to pick up omissions. If they are essential to the story, weave them in when opportunity presents itself.

As you grow in the art of storytelling, through experience and preparation, you will more fully abandon yourself to the story. You will attain a freedom and joyousness which is the heritage of every true artist.

Maintain the interest of the story.—One way to do this is to take the hearers in on the story. Let them come along with you as you enter the gate of storyland. Every energy of the storyteller must be bent toward this end.

1. *The voice.*—More than any other one thing, the voice has power to maintain the interest of the story. It

expresses the feeling of the storyteller. If the story has gripped you, it will be manifest in your voice. If you feel your words, you will make your listeners feel them too.

Let the voice express the meaning of the words. Give the word "love" a warm feeling; the word "happy" a light, joyful feeling; the word "hungry" a sad, painful feeling. Use the facial expression to help in interpreting the feeling of words. The power of the storyteller lies in his eyes as well as his voice. Your facial expression can unite with your voice to weave a spell of magic about your listeners.

Change your voice with the change of characters. Use light, loving tones for "good" characters; and heavy, harsh tones for "bad" characters. Make each character stand out as a distinct personality. As you impersonate each character, use the tone of voice that you think he would use. Dialogue adds variety and interest to your story.

Enunciate clearly. The vowels lend music to our language—do not slur over or omit them. The "ing" words should be clearly pronounced.

Be certain that your voice carries to the last individual. Let the tones come from below the diaphragm rather than from the throat. Keep the tone distinct, carefully modulated, and reasonably soft.

When you are telling stories to children, sometimes a child becomes restless. If one interrupts or seems to lose interest, draw him into the story by calling his name. He will feel that the story is being told just to him. Laying your hand quietly on his knee, you might say, "and, John, the little pig did get over the stile!" Increase the speed and suspense of the tale. Lower the voice so that the child must be quiet in order to hear. Never rebuke a child for not listening. It is your business to make him listen!

Do not become so dead bent on the lesson to be derived from the story that your voice becomes didactic in tone and speed. Keep the voice and manner free and spontane-

ous. Let the story flow along freely, as a rivulet on its way to the wide ocean.

2. *The language of the story.*—The language of the story must fit the tale to be told—especially is this true with little children, when new words are such a thrilling adventure. Not only should the language fit the spirit of the story, but also it should be familiar to the hearers.

Words which have sense appeal make the story more realistic. Make the words stand out, as “Little Spot was so *hun-gry!*” The small child understands the sense word, and it strikes home to older people also.

Short sentences are more graphic in the story told. However, there is a tendency to join short sentences with the same words. Vary the conjunctions—instead of always using “and” and “but,” try “also,” “while,” or “however.” This will take practice and conscious, deliberate effort at first. You will see that it is worth the effort, because variety adds interest and enthusiasm to the story. Increase your vocabulary—this will make it possible for you to tell stories to adults and young people as well as to children. Keep in mind that children, too, like new words and need to make their acquaintance through story. Choose the language to bring out the real meaning of the story.

Do not hurry the story. Tell it in such a way that the true teaching stands out. The language can be so chosen, and the narrative can be so told that it will teach opposite lessons. In the story of Robin Hood, the hero can be presented as a robber outlaw or as a brave man who defended the poor and helpless. The difference comes in interpretation, manner of telling, and language used.

3. *The pause.*—Another way to maintain the interest of your story is to use the pause dramatically. Point up a character or incident with a pause. Create a feeling of suspense by pausing for a second. Remember that a pause separates not only groups of words, sentences, and scenes,

but also characters, incidents, and the conclusion of the story. The pause is a simple and effective means of emphasis.

4. *Gestures*.—Use gestures sparingly and only when natural. Do not use action such as bending, jumping, or otherwise distorting the body. This calls attention to the narrator, who should stay in the background. It is not his story but the tale of his characters. When gestures are used naturally and with restraint, they can help to maintain the interest of the story.

5. *Climax*.—Make the climax clear, distinct, and dramatic. It is the reason for telling the story. Herein lies the truth to be instilled into the character of the listeners. This is the part for which you have been building up such an expectancy! You dare not disappoint your hearers now! Put all you have into this climax and make it the most dramatic part of the story.

6. *Moral*.—Close your story without a moral. Once your climax has been reached, your story is ready to stop. Do this at once! Never more than a sentence or two should follow the climax. Like the introduction, your conclusion may indicate the type of story, whether serious or funny, fact or fancy, simple or profound. It bears repeating: never tack on a moral. If the story has been well told, your listeners have the moral already. A quiet tone of voice is best for concluding the story—it leaves the listeners in a relaxed mood and permits a sigh of satisfaction. Do not ask questions concerning the story or encourage the children to ask them. Always leave a pause of a minute or two, following the story, before going into some other activity. Children especially enjoy these moments of contemplation. Marie Shedlock, considered by some as the mother of modern storytelling, recommends five minutes of complete silence following the story.

Use pictures with the story.—The artist storyteller

paints a word picture in the minds of his hearers. Through the imagination, he carries his listeners into many lands and among other peoples. The dramatic telling of the story presents vivid scenes and vital characters. One of the values of storytelling comes from this growth of the imagination. Because of this painting of word pictures on the part of the teller, actual pictures should be used sparingly or not at all. When one is used, it should come after and not before the story is told. The reason for this is obvious. Were the story revealed in picture form, the suspense and element of surprise would be lacking in the word form. A picture in the hand—or anything for that matter—is distracting to both the teller and the listener. Let nothing hinder the weaving of the magic spell which is the work of the true artist!

In many church schools, a large picture is provided for each Bible story. Use this picture after the period of silence recommended at the close of the story. At this time, it can deepen the impression of the truth. It can then illuminate the story for the child. Let him handle the picture. For the little child, seeing is feeling. He wants to point out the characters and objects in the picture. When a picture has been mounted and covered with cellophane, it will take much wear from little hands.

Pictures have another value in storytelling. They can be used to prepare the way for the story. This preparation, however, should come on a day previous to the time of the story, so that it will not detract from the freshness and charm of the story. Unfamiliar terms, characters, customs, or peoples can be explained by way of pictures.

Pictures have value, also, as a method of recall. This is one of the best uses to which pictures can be put—as far as they are related to storytelling. Seeing the picture again is like meeting a familiar friend, and the story comes tripping back into mind.

Perhaps a word of caution should be spoken on the matter of having children illustrate stories with pictures of their own making. I quite agree with Marie Shedlock that children should not be encouraged to reproduce the story immediately. Let them enjoy the story before you begin to probe for results and impressions. Most likely their picture-drawing will not indicate the impression made on their minds. More often, the drawing is a disappointment to them. A kindergarten teacher had told her children about a handsome knight; then a little boy asked to draw his picture on the blackboard. Stepping back to view his drawing, the little fellow remarked sadly, "And I thought he was so handsome!"

Tell the story simply, directly, and dramatically. Lose yourself in the telling of it! As you gain experience, you will abandon yourself more and more to the story. Your reward? A radiant glow on the upturned faces and a deep sigh, "Tell it again!"

VII

Dramatizing the Story



FOR THE LITTLE CHILDREN, we speak of dramatization as “story-playing.” To older children, it is “play-acting.” This word of caution should be given: never dramatize a story immediately after it has been told. To do so would break the magic spell woven by the storyteller.

Choose wisely the story that is to be dramatized. All stories do not lend themselves to this type of creative activity. No child should be asked to represent Jesus in a story.

Tell the story often enough for the children to become familiar with the characters and the scenes.

VALUES OF DRAMATIZATION

There are many benefits derived from this form of "play-acting," but only a few of these values will be mentioned here.

Meets a need of childhood.—Children are born imitators. The little girl likes to dress up in her mother's long dress and high-heel slippers. The boy likes to play cowboy, Indian, or robber. Children dwell in the realm of the imaginary world, but even the young person or the adult likes to pretend to live another's life.

Overcomes self-consciousness in the timid child.—He forgets himself because he becomes the character he is acting. Inhibitions lose their hold, as the timid child projects his personality into the life of someone else. The child experiences sheer joy in the acting process, and there comes to be a spirit of fellowship between the child and his leader.

Develops language ability.—Children learn to express themselves clearly as they learn to speak for someone else. They become discerning as they decide upon the true way to represent the storybook character.

Impresses the truth of the story.—As children play-act the characters in the story, they are impressed with the reward that follows right action and the punishment that results from evil doing. They realize the joy and satisfaction of doing right. The story takes on life and reality as they dramatize it. For them, the story truth becomes crystalized. Not only through the ear, but also through the eye, the story truths come to them. Children learn to do by doing. As someone has said, there is "no impression without expression." Dramatization provides the expression for the impression of the truths in story form.

Provides relaxation.—This is one of the finest ways to provide a time of profitable relaxation. To the children, it is play, not work.

Perhaps most religious leaders are convinced of the value of dramatization, and would be willing to introduce this type of activity if only they knew how to go about it. For these, a few suggestions may be in order.

HOW TO DRAMATIZE

Choose a story adapted to dramatization.—The story should have plenty of action and a simple plot. For smaller children, try to find a story that has enough characters for all to participate, though it be only group pantomime. Do not attempt to use any story until it has become thoroughly familiar to the children through repeated telling.

Talk it over with the group.—Ask them how they think each character looked, how he talked, how he walked. In short, help them to visualize each character. Discuss the setting, the events, everything about the story.

Choose the characters.—Whenever practical, let the children choose the characters they would like to represent. However, you will need to guide in this, or the most forward children will always assume the star roles while those who most need the training will stand back.

In assigning parts, do not overlook the timid child. If he is too self-conscious to take a "speaking part," let him be one of a group to pantomime. His confidence will grow with experience until he will graduate into more important roles.

Teach the children to take turns. This sharing of honors is a by-product of dramatization. Help the leaders be willing to become followers. They must be courteous enough to allow the timid children to share in the leading roles, even though they may be less perfect as "stars." The shy child should be encouraged. With much patience and

unobtrusive guidance, he can learn to improve and can find self-abandon.

Divide the story into scenes.—Through questions and suggestions lead the children to create the scenes. Perhaps these should be written down by the adult worker. Older boys and girls can write out the dialogue and scenes, making their own "script." They can enter into the drama more extensively than the little children.

Keep the dramatization spontaneous.—Now you are ready to "act out" the story. Let the children, under guidance, present the drama as it appears to them—just for the sheer joy of creative expression. Do not work for the finished product. Remember that the aim is self-expression for the child—not an artistic production. Never make the dramatization a show piece.

For the little child, you are merely playing out the life of the story. Forget about staging and properties! Costuming should be merely suggestive. Play *with* the children—not *for* them. In telling the story, use such conversation as will suggest to the children what to say and let them make up their own lines. Sometimes a leading question will help them choose the correct words and action.

Make as few corrections as possible. You can spoil the acting out of a play by too much supervision. Repeat the drama on other days, exchanging characters, so that all have a try at the "leading parts."

Try pantomime plays.—For younger children and the self-conscious ones among the older age group, the pantomime is an excellent means of self-expression. Freedom of movement and facial expression are encouraged when no words are spoken. Characterization is sometimes surprisingly perfect! Mildred Forbes tells of an outdoor festival, when the children pantomimed the "Three Bears." Said she, "When the Baby Bear turned his empty bowl to the audience, his face was such a picture of comic despair that

the spectators restrained themselves with difficulty." There was no effort at exhibition—the children merely played the story as they had done it many times before.

Dramatization can be a splendid medium of creative activity if its true purpose is kept in mind. There may be times when the children would like to share with their parents and friends the joy of such expression. This should never be thought of as a "show" but just as a way of letting these friends in on the fun of play-acting. Make the preparation for such a time simple, and never let the children be exploited. When costumes are used, encourage the mothers to allow their children to make simple ones. Dramatizing a story should be the work of the children, not that of adults.

Recommended bibliography

* 1. Bailey, Carolyn Sherwin, *Plays for the Children's Hour* (Springfield: Milton Bradley, 1931). Carolyn Bailey gives directions for a simple acting out of many favorite stories. The amateur will find help in initiating drama as a creative activity.

* 2. Barton, Lucy, *Costuming the Biblical Play* (Boston: Walter H. Baker Co., 1938). A helpful book for those who work with older children.

* 3. Miller, Elizabeth Erwin, *The Dramatization of Bible Stories* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1918). The author writes from her experience with children between the ages of six and fourteen years. She shows not only a knowledge of drama but also a knowledge and understanding of children. This is a most practical book for religious leaders.

4. Ward, Winifred, ed., *Stories to Dramatize* (Anchorage: Children's Theatre Press, 1951). Stories suitable for

* Out of print.

dramatizing for children from kindergarten through Junior age. Prepared by one who has had much experience in the field.

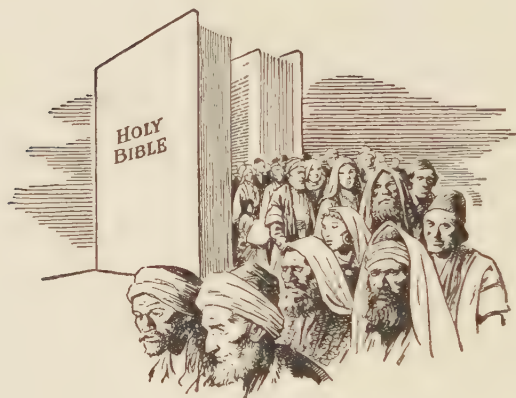
* 5. Ward, Winifred, *Creative Dramatics* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1930). Miss Ward has written out of her experience with children. She has tried to inspire directors with the possibilities of the drama for developing right attitudes and appreciations.

* 6. Wood, W. Carleton, *The Dramatic Method in Religious Education* (Cincinnati: The Abingdon Press, 1931). Working with children is discussed by the author in one section of the book. His illustration (in this section) "The Realm of Heaven belongs to such as these" should challenge any elementary worker. There is a complete bibliography that can guide in further study of dramatization.

* Out of print.

VIII

The Bible Story



THE BIBLE contains some of the most precious gems of all literature—the rightful heritage of every age. In it are narratives suited to every age level, from the youngest child to the oldest adult. The babyhood of Jesus and that of Moses are most appealing to the little child; the lad who gave his lunch to Jesus captivates the Primary; the story of David and Goliath is exciting to the Junior; Ruth and Naomi present a challenge to the early-adolescent; while the story of Isaac and Rebecca has special attraction to young people. These and others are some of the greatest stories ever written for moral and Christian education. Beside giving a spiritual history of the Hebrew race, the Bible also presents the story of the inner development of individual personality.

For the little child, the Bible portrays God as a loving Heavenly Father, who made the world in which he lives and who watches over him as an unseen Friend. For the older child, the Bible pictures God as a personal Ruler, a supreme Law-giver, who should become the highest authority for him. For the nine- to twelve-year-old, the Bible provides the biographies of heroes and pictures Jesus as the greatest hero of all, a Model and a Guide for his own life. The Bible appeals to the adolescent through stories of romance, loyalty, of spiritual heroism. Jesus is presented as the great Lover of all times and of all people.

Katherine Dunlap Cather, the educator, tells us that "one of the glaring defects of our modern educational system is that almost no provision is made for the study of the Bible as a great classic."¹ She is correct in her observation that boys and girls go through grade school and high school without sufficient knowledge of the Hebrew epic to enable them to understand the world's best literature. One could add that, today, few college graduates have an adequate knowledge of this, the world's greatest literature.

Ruskin, the writer, declared that the Bible would be pre-eminently *the* child's book even though it had no religious value above other books.

Stanley Hall, the psychologist, maintains that it is just as preposterous to eliminate the Bible from education in our day as it would have been to remove Homer from the education of Greek youth in the days of Plato.

VALUES OF THE BIBLE STORY

Already, one chapter has been devoted to the values of storytelling. All of these values can be applied to the Bible story, because every type of story (except the fairy tale)

¹"Educating by Story-Telling," New York: World Book Company, (1918), p. 118.

can be found in this great literary storehouse. However, there are special values which accrue to these distinctive character stories.

Bible stories lead children unconsciously to an appreciation of the beautiful.—Someone has said that if a person were shut off on an island, with only a copy of the Bible and Shakespeare, he would never acquire anything but perfect English. Much of the world's great literature, paintings, sculpture, and music have been inspired by the Bible. These stories which have enriched the world can have a powerful influence upon the peoples of today. The telling of a Bible story may plant a seed in a creative mind which may produce, in the years ahead, some great work of art. We heartily agree with Sara Cone Bryant that the Bible's stories are unsurpassed in our literature (or the literature of any other people) for purity of style and loftiness of content.

Bible stories have a religious purpose.—They give significant religious meaning to all of life. Coleridge once said, "No other book finds me as the Bible does." Because they deal with the everyday lives of everyday people, Bible stories are most helpful in the all-important task of character building. They provide him with a guide by which to solve his own problems. They help to develop courage, showing the individual how to meet the demands of life and be obedient to his ideals.

A suggestive list follows:

Brotherly love—Joseph and His Brethren
Courage—David and Goliath, Esther, Gideon
Forgiveness—Jacob and Esau, Joseph, David
Friendship—Jonathan and David
Generosity—Abraham and Lot
Heroism—Daniel in the Lions' Den, Stephen, Paul
Obedience—Abram's call

Reverence—Abraham and the Angels, Moses and the burning bush

Unselfishness—Mary of Bethany, Boy who gave his lunch to Jesus

Bible stories deal with human experiences about which children want to know.—That is why they appeal to the interest of even the youngest child. When told to children during the early years, they leave lasting impressions. A young child's faith is simple, and he readily accepts the love and presence of an all-wise God. As he listens to the stories of Jesus, which reveal God to him, he comes to love this unseen Friend. The story form presents the Bible in a way which the child can best understand and assimilate it. It helps him to see the beauty and joy of rightdoing and the ugliness and folly of wrongdoing.

Teachers of religion agree that the Bible is pre-eminently the storybook for all age groups. The question is how to present the stories so that they will accomplish the desired results. The chapter on technique applies to the Bible story as well as to the non-religious one. However, there are some suggestions peculiar to the Bible story which should be added here.

Many people feel that the Bible story is the most difficult kind to tell. In many ways it is; and for that reason, added preparation is needed. If the Bible story holds essential values of right-living in a greater degree than any other type, surely it is worthy of all the preparation necessary for a vivid and effective presentation.

HOW TO PREPARE THE BIBLE STORY

Select the Bible story especially suited to the age of your listeners.—For little children, choose narratives about children of Bible times: Baby Moses, Baby Isaac. The boyhoods of Samuel, Joseph, David, and Timothy have great

appeal to young children, too. Even the story of Ishmael and Hagar, omitting the unsuitable part and stressing the mother's love, is appropriate for this age, and the Babe of Bethlehem should enrich the life of every child.

For the nine- to twelve-year-old, the Bible offers heroic stories of Hebrew people whose lives were filled with adventure. The Old Testament especially is a veritable storehouse of hero stories. They are most valuable when told in sequence. Beginning with the call of Abraham, you may wander with Junior boys and girls through the Sinai wilderness, sharing there the exploits and adventures of the early Hebrew people, into the conquest of the Promised Land under Joshua's leadership. The strong, virile stories of the kings, judges, and prophets of Israel appeal to boys and girls alike. These Old Testament hero stories are replete with character-building traits.

During the stormy adolescent years of stress and strain, the young person will profit most from Bible stories that present the manhood of Jesus: his strength of character, his devotion to others, and his life of victory. Adolescents are interested in the beauty and ideals of Bible people who were serious about their own lives. Always avoid the sordid incidents in the lives of great Bible heroes or heroines. A lift and a challenge can come from these flesh and blood peoples whose spiritual qualities triumphed over physical weakness.

Study the background.—If you are to make the Bible story live, the land and people must be real to you. Study Bible geography and customs. Absorb the color and romance of Bible times. Acquire a vast amount of information concerning the ways of life in Bible lands. Become familiar with the topography of the land, with the climate, and with the customs of the people. Geography has left its stamp upon the history and character of the Hebrews, because they lived in close contact with nature. God used

even the physical contour of the land to help mold the life of the people who dwelt among its mountains, valleys, and plains.

Because the setting is so foreign to our present-day living, many people shy away from Bible stories and are afraid to attempt the telling of them. They have overlooked the fact that life today, in Bible lands, is very much the same as it was in Bible times. Many helpful books have been written for the armchair traveler, so that one need not be ignorant of the geography of that land or the customs of its people.

HOW TO PRESENT THE BIBLE STORY

We have already stated that general techniques of storytelling can be applied to the Bible story. However, a few suggestions for telling this particular type of story may be in order.

Do not assume a peculiarly sacred manner when you tell a Bible story. Some well-meaning teachers of religion have repelled rather than attracted children by their sanctimonious attitude. Bible characters are real flesh-and-blood people who had the same desires and joys that we have. Make them live for your listeners! Use pictures of oriental peoples, curios from Bible lands, and biblical paintings to make the characters real.

A good introduction is even more essential for the Bible story than for any other type. Use an exciting title that arouses interest, and leave the information concerning the source until the last. When you have captured the interest of your listeners and they have enjoyed your story, then tell them where it came from and show them the place in the Bible. Some children who are familiar with Bible stories think they know more than the storyteller and will turn away from the thought of a story repeated. Other children, who have not come to love the Bible, think of

the stories as “sissy” and will refuse to listen when it is introduced by the statement, “Now, children, I am going to tell you a Bible story”—particularly if that statement is made in a very pious tone of voice! Many people have acquired a dislike for the Bible and a “duty-to-read” attitude toward it because of just such treatment in their childhood days. The gold of the Bible offers a challenge to the teacher of religion to present the stories in a vivid, virile manner!

Be true to the Bible facts in your story. If you do not accept some portion of the Bible as true, do not attempt to give it to others in story form. Remember that people who do accept the truths of the Bible—including the miracles—would be repelled by having them explained away in story form. It is legitimate to embellish the bare facts of the Bible account with anything that is true to the customs and people of the time. In telling the story of Mary and Joseph going to Bethlehem, you can say, “I think you could hear the ‘clomp, clomp, clomp’ of the donkey as he walked along the road.” However, you must be careful not to add imaginary incidents that would give a wrong or different impression of the story.

Use the language and style of the Bible narrative whenever possible. Never use the language of the street! Remember that one of the objectives is to develop an appreciation for beautiful English, and this cannot be done if you take liberties with the simple dignified language of the Bible. Of course, it is not only permissible but necessary to modify the language in order to make a meaning clear, but the Bible expressions frequently bear repetition.

End the Bible story immediately after the climax, without tacking on a sermonette. The temptation to moralize is greater with the Bible story than with any other kind. Resist it! Follow the inspiration of the story with a brief pause.

In summing up this discussion of the Bible story, it is well to emphasize a statement of Katherine Cather: "If one knows the Bible well enough, it is possible from it alone to satisfy every story need of the child from infancy to manhood. But this can be done only by those to whom the life and thought of the Hebrews is as familiar as the narratives themselves. Otherwise they cannot be given against a rich background that makes them satisfying and complete." *

Background book list

1. Adams, J. McKee, *Biblical Backgrounds* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934). A book for students who are willing to "dig in" in their preparation for telling Bible stories.

2. Cruden, Alexander, *Concordance*. A small but complete concordance of Bible references.

3. Edersheim, Alfred, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1930). The author takes the reader into the Holy Land and makes the people and scenes of the Bible "come alive."

4. Miller, Madelaine S. and J. Lane, *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. A new Bible dictionary, very complete. It makes much use of illustrations. Perhaps the best one volume dictionary available. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952).

5. Smith, George Adam, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*. Although this is an old book, it gives a rather thorough discussion of the ancient land of Palestine.

* *Religious Education Through Story-Telling* (New York: The Abindgon Press, 1925), p. 176.

IX Using the Story in Religious Education



THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES, the story has been used as a means of teaching religious truths. The preacher has used it to illustrate his message; the mother in the home has used it to make the Christian religion real to her child; the church school teacher has found that the story is the best method of impressing a truth upon the minds and hearts of listeners.

The story reveals the heart of a people. One finds among all peoples a reverence for the old story—the charm of awe and mystery. The art of storytelling is accompanied by an essentially religious attitude the world over. In old tales of giants, around the American Indian campfire at night; in the wonder stories of animal life, in the villages

of the African forest; in the Eskimo tales of ancient times; from China or Japan or wherever one ventures in storyland, there seems to be a central theme and purpose: the teaching of religion, the preserving of customs and tradition.

Since it is primarily the teacher of the Christian religion for whom this book is written, we suggest some uses to which the story may be put. For the teacher of children, the story is the best method of instruction, and all stories can be used to promote the religious education of the individual. If a story has possibilities for character building, it can also be said to have religious value.

While the Bible story is pre-eminently fitted to teach religion, some stories from child life and even fairy stories have essential ethical values. This is not to say that the fairy tale should be used in church programs on Sunday, but there are many other occasions when church leaders can use it with profit.

USING THE STORY IN THE HOME

Religious training should begin in the home, and an established story time presents opportunities for such instruction. Whatever else they do, both father and mother should learn to tell stories to their children. They do not have to be professionals, but if they will give of their interest, time, and enthusiasm to developing their talents in the art, they will reap rich rewards in understanding of and fellowship with their children and in the spiritual and cultural growth of their children. They may build ideals of life that will become steppingstones in the upward climb of their children.

Stories can solve many problems for children in the home, and many habits can be changed by telling the right story at the right time. Happy is the home that provides for a quiet time for storytelling and for fellowship and

prayer. One mother chose the quiet of the evening for the story hour in her home. After the children had their baths and were fed, she gathered them by the fireside in winter and under the stars in summer and told them first a story from child life, followed by a Bible story. Then came a period of prayer. As she tucked her children into bed, she sang to them the "Sand-man Song." Through the years the story hour was continued. Later, the children themselves told some of the stories. The Bible was read, and sometimes portions of other books were also read aloud. Today, those children—grown to young people—love good books and the Bible. They are students of music and have a sense of mission in life.

For the sick child, stories have a special appeal. When the young patient is weary of convalescence, stories have the power to quieten his spirit and to bring relaxation and contentment. When the Junior boy or girl lacks incentive or motivation—when life seems humdrum and stale—the hero story is just the thing to inspire and challenge!

Margaret Eggleston tells the power of the story to discipline the child. Because of disobedience, a little boy was sent to bed without his supper. After a time, John called to his father, "Dad, will you tell me about Dr. Grenfel on the ice-cake? I want to work for him, and I like that story." The father went to his son's room and told again the story from Dr. Grenfel's book, *Adrift on an Ice Pan*. When he had finished, John said, "Guess he wouldn't want a boy who couldn't be trusted, would he? Tomorrow I'll try harder. Good night and thanks, Dad."¹

THE CHURCH ASSISTING MOTHERS

Many mothers are eager to use this age-old art in the religious training of their children, but they do not know

¹ Eggleston, Margaret W., *Use of the Story in Religious Education* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1936), pp. 45-46.

how to tell a story well. Herein is the opportunity for church leaders: They can provide classes in storytelling. No more helpful study course could be offered to children's workers than one in storytelling. If a brief text on technique can be provided and a proper time chosen for the study, mothers eagerly respond to such an opportunity. Many schools of adult education now provide a course in storytelling, but too often the religious values are overlooked.

Some churches have found it profitable to send mimeographed stories into the homes at special seasons of the year. Many times it is difficult for parents to find just the story they want for special occasions, with the correct religious emphasis. Church school teachers usually have had more training in this field and can be of real benefit to parents in this respect. Such a service would strengthen the church-home relationship and make for a closer tie between teachers and parents.

Another helpful project is that of providing parents with a graded list of stories that can be obtained at their public library. Choosing the correct story for the particular age and occasion is not an easy task for the amateur storyteller. Having had more experience with the art, church leaders are qualified to guide the parents in training. Many an excellent story is hidden away in the pages of some library book, waiting for some searcher-of-gold to bring it to life!

Not only should parents know of story material available in the public library but they should also have access to good books of stories in the church library. As any religious leader will tell you, there is a dearth of stories from child life and nature that are suitable for children. Trained elementary workers can render a real service by making a study of this need and by placing in the church library books that will help to meet it.

USING THE STORY IN THE CHURCH

By teachers in the church school.—For the church school teacher, a knowledge of how to tell the Bible story is most essential. The story can be used with the large group—the departmental assembly. It can also be used in the smaller group—with the class discussion. Heretofore, many people have thought of the story as a method to use with little children only. Today, however, the art of storytelling is being revived, and its usefulness extended to the older child and even to the adolescent and adult.

By leaders in the training organizations.—Just as teachers in the church school have found the use of the story valuable for their Sunday morning program, even so leaders in the training organizations are realizing its worth in their program of religious education on Sunday evening. A most impressive devotional was presented in a general assembly program one Sunday evening. As the picture of Christ in Gethsemane was projected on a screen, a young lady quietly and effectively told the story "The Picture That Lived."² In the smaller groups, divided on the basis of age, an even more meaningful approach can be made by using the story. Juniors and Intermediates themselves, if encouraged and given a bit of training, can present religious truths in story form.

In missionary education.—Storytelling is an impressive method of presenting missionary education. In the missionary organizations for children and young people as well as in those for adults, missionary stories have stirred many hearts and lives to action. Not a few missionaries can testify that they received their first impressions for life commitment through biographical stories of missionaries and narratives about peoples of other lands. Missionary

² Loc. cit., p. 58-61.

heroes, presented in story form, appeal to young and old alike. A missionary leader was attempting to inspire a group of adults with a missionary motive, but seemed to be talking into thin air. Then she began the story of "American Beauty Roses" (a story challenge to deep consecration). At once, there was a noticeable change in the interest of the audience. A quietness came over the people, and an eager interest was manifest in their faces. The story accomplished what the devotional alone could not do.

In Vacation Bible School.—Surely, all workers recognize that the story method of teaching is the one most frequently used in Vacation Bible Schools. But many people do not realize the need of thorough preparation. While the Vacation Bible School curriculum usually includes stories to be used on certain days, workers should be encouraged to appropriate other stories which appeal to them and fit in with the unit of work. This word of caution bears repeating: Never moralize or cross-examine the children at the close of the story.

By the church library.—Just as the public library uses the story hour to encourage the reading of good books, so the church library can profit from the same art. Many times, children, young people, and adults think of books in the church library as dull and uninteresting. Occasionally, one finds a rather complete church library which is suffering from very poor circulation! Proper publicity can cure this condition, and one of the best forms of stimulating interest is through a story hour as part of the library's program.

THE STORY HOUR

What it is.—The story hour in the public library, is a set time (usually an hour long) when children are invited

to the library to hear stories told and to read books. Its purpose is to introduce the boys and girls to good literature and to encourage the reading of books on the library shelves.

Church people are beginning to see the value of such a story hour, and it is being used by the church library, in Good Will Centers, in homes, and in many institutions for unfortunate and underprivileged people.

Where to use the story hour.—Frequently we hear it said that, since people do not come to the church, the church must go to them. This is literally true. There is no more interesting or effective way for the church to go to people on the outside than by the magic route of storytelling. Once you have told an individual a story, you have almost always won his friendship and confidence. Church leaders do well to use this age-old art in reaching people long neglected by church groups.

Many areas of service are available to the missionary-hearted person who loves people and wants to bring cheer into their lives. There are foreign-speaking people in all large communities. Some of the earliest story hours were on the streets of New England cities where immigrant peoples of all ages eagerly listened to tales of their lands as well as those of our own. These lonely nationals welcome the storyteller. Stories cultivate a spirit of unity and a sense of belonging.

There are detention homes where the drab, circumscribed lives of the occupants can be brightened by a thoughtful winsome storyteller. Usually the authorities of these institutions are glad to have church people visit them in this capacity. Stories can bring cheer to old people in institutional homes. They can often renew faith for the sick and discouraged of our hospitals; they can challenge to higher living the inmates of our jails.

Stories can renew forgotten ideals. Margaret Eggleston¹

tells of an experience during the First World War, when she was telling stories to soldiers at Camp Sherman on Mother's Day. As she began her stories of mother love and care, she noticed a big Armenian in front of her, who expressed his aversion by a shrug of the shoulders. Then she noticed he was thinking; his hands began to move, and then his face turned so pale that she thought he would faint.

After the stories, Mrs. Eggleston pinned a white rose on each soldier. The Armenian grasped her hand and stood for several minutes, looking her in the face. Mrs. Eggleston said, "I'm sorry you feel ill. Let the little rose tell you how gladly Mother would care for you if she were here. I am glad to give it to you for her."

Later that afternoon the soldier told her of the struggle which he had during the telling of that story. He had quarreled with his mother, because she had wanted to help him stay clean and pure. He had left home many years before and was determined to go to France and let his mother wonder where he was. Through the power of the story, Mrs. Eggleston tells us, the soldier saw his error and was reconciled to his mother.

How to plan the story hour.—"Plan your work and then work your plan" is a good motto for one who would project a story hour. The right kind of planning beforehand will lend informality to the occasion. You will not adhere strictly to your outline, but it will allow for freedom with the children.

The story hour should have a central theme and purpose. Sometimes the theme may be seasonal; at other times, it may be based on some character trait, such as honesty, orderliness, kindness, generosity, helpfulness, or

¹ Eggleston, Margaret W., *Use of the Story in Religious Education* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936).

whatever the needs of the group may suggest. It may center around an author, a country, or a character such as we find in the Bible. Or the theme may be on animals, flowers, music, a race of people, a great hero, or any other subject which the storyteller deems feasible. The storyteller may present excerpts from books or give a very brief, condensed story of the entire book.

Usually, not more than three stories should be told in one story hour. The first should be for atmosphere—to introduce or prepare the way for the second, which should be the climax, the strongest story of them all. The last story should conclude the story hour and may be in a lighter vein. It should leave the children relaxed and satisfied.

Edna Lyman has likened the story hour to an orchestral concert. Just as in the beginning of the concert the orchestra demands the attention of its hearers, even so the first narrative of the story hour should arouse the interest of the listeners. When the story has received the consideration of the people, it is time for the more serious part—that which pulses with inspiration and uplift. The artist stirs the emotions and ideals and appeals to the intellect of his listeners, who now have an attitude of understanding and appreciation. Then comes the finale, the restful ending of the symphony or the story hour.

The teller should plan a balanced program for the occasion; short stories should be interspersed with long ones, and humorous stories with those of pathos.

Never tire the children with too many or too long stories at one time. It is better to leave them with a desire for more than to risk a listless, surfeited attitude toward storytelling.

Costumes, pictures, articles from different countries and races, music, and many other things can be used to provide atmosphere for the story hour. Anything that lends en-

chantment to the occasion and is related to the stories can be effectively used.

Many types of creative activities can be used. The best time for this phase of the program is at the beginning, letting the children recall the stories of other hours. Creative activities provide opportunities for the child in participation and self-expression.

Listed below are a few suggestions:

1. Dramatization of well-known stories.
2. Retelling of stories by the children.
3. Clay modeling of characters in the stories.
4. Murals to illustrate former stories.
5. Booklet to illustrate the stories. One page could be made each day. The front cover could be made the first day.
6. Games—if possible, they should fit in with the theme of the story hour.
7. Singing of familiar songs. Introduce new ones—one at each meeting. Finger play and motion songs.
8. Puppets and paper characters (found in color books).
9. Books—always there should be a “library center,” where the children can look at and read books that fit in with the theme of the story hour.

How to begin.—First, secure a place. The location should be determined by the group to which you wish to minister. The nearer it is to the children, the better your response will be.

Decide on the time. Again, this will be determined by your group. If the story hour is for little children, perhaps a mid-morning hour would be best. If you are planning for Primaries or Juniors—school activities will need to be taken into consideration.

Your story hour will be more successful if you plan for one age group such as: Beginners—four- and five-year-olds; Primaries—six-, seven-, and eight-year-olds—or Jun-

iors—nine-, ten-, eleven-, and twelve-year-olds. This will enable you to choose stories that will interest each age group.

You are now ready to advertise. Tell your church people about it. Secure their interest and co-operation. Mimeograph sheets, giving the time, place, and some interesting fact about the story hour. Make the sheet attractive by some interesting drawing. Get one or more children to help you deliver these sheets in the homes. As you visit, you will be able to answer many questions concerning the story hour ads. Arouse enthusiasm for it. Be sure that your assistants themselves are a good advertisement for the story hour. They make the first impression and can determine your first response. After the first story hour, the children will tell other children, and you will soon have an overflow audience.

Make the first story hour as attractive as possible. Have everything well prepared. Serve some light refreshments. At the same time, explain that this is a special treat, so that the children will not expect it every time. If the program is fitted to the child's interests and needs, it will not be necessary to serve something every time.

Through the story hour, workers can gain entrance into homes where otherwise they would not be welcomed. By taking an interest in the child, you may reach parents for the Lord and his kingdom. Children can often be led from the story hour into the church school and, eventually, into the church.

A group of young people sponsored a story hour in a restricted district of a university town. From the wealthy homes, few people went to church. There were Jewish homes and homes of highly trained, professional people. One mother, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of one of the world's largest universities said, "My children have more worthwhile things to do than to go to church." Just the

same, she allowed her children to come to the story hour. A few weeks later her children started going to Sunday school. When the story hour closed, three months later, she wrote a note of thanks to the workers.

The story hour can enrich the lives of children and adults alike and make a contribution of eternal value.

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X Original Stories



THE WAY-BAG

John G. Shannon

LONG, LONG AGO, our great grandparents came over to America from England and from other places. They settled in the eastern part of the United States. They plowed the land and planted and harvested, and, after some years, they began to build cities. Before too long, some of the people began to move westward.

The ones who were left at home wanted to hear from their loved ones who had moved westward. But there was no fast mail and no post offices like we have today. It

wasn't until 1896, only fifty-seven years ago, that mail was delivered to people 'way out in the country.

The people had to have some way to hear from their brothers, sisters, and cousins. So different men started private mail routes, and the one we read about most is the Pony Express. A man would get on his horse and take his rifle with him on one side and a way-bag on the other side, behind the saddle. It was called a way-bag or pouch because the rider took out the mail along the way and delivered it.

He would ride as hard as he could go. When the horse became very tired, the rider would stop at a place called a station. There, another man and another horse would be waiting, all ready to go. The first rider would give him the way-bag and away he would go. In a few weeks the letters would be carried across the United States, and the people back home would know that all was well.

Today, we do not use the Pony Express. Now, we have railroads and trucks to bring the mail to each town. Sometimes we go to the post office for our mail, and at other times it is delivered at our own door.

What happened to the way-bag? Oh, it's still here! Of course, we don't have the same kind of way-bag, but there are many other kinds that are used. Today, a man gets into a pick-up truck and carries the mail from one town to the next. In the truck are bags that are full of mail from all over the world, and they have on them the name of the city to which they are going. There is a way-bag that the driver carries in the seat beside him. As he goes along the way from town to town, he picks up the mail that is going only to the next town and puts it in the way-bag. When he gets to the next town, he gives the mail to the postmaster who unloads the bag and takes out the mail for his post office and then puts the mail for the next stop in the way-bag and locks it.

As he drives down the highway, he keeps a sharp lookout so other cars will not bump into his truck and thus stop the way-bag from taking letters to boys and girls all over the world.

PERRITO GOES TO BIBLE SCHOOL

Nellie Boyette

Perrito was shaggy and brownish with short legs. He had one black ear which stood up, and one brown ear which hung down. He lived with Carlos and Juanita, a little Mexican boy and girl. Perrito came to their house one day begging for something to eat, and they fed him tortillas and put a mat under the cage of Lora their whistling parrot, for him to sleep on. Mamacita and Papacita came to look at him and called him Perrito. Since then, he had belonged to them.

One morning Perrito lay on his mat and pretended to be asleep, but his black ear was listening and one eye was open. He saw Carlos and Juanita come out of the house, and he knew they were going some place for Carlos had his serapé over his shoulder and Juanita had on her blue rebozo which covered her head and shoulders like a hood and a cape. They were laughing and talking and did not know he was following them until he had caught up with them.

"Go home, Perrito," commanded Carlos. "You cannot go with us."

Perrito lay down on his stomach and thumped his tail on the cobblestones. Why couldn't he go? Didn't he always go to the corn field with them when they went to

help Papacita with the corn? Didn't he always go to the Plaza and play on the green grass? Didn't he always go with Mamacita and Juanita when they went to the river to wash the clothes? Why couldn't he go now?

"Go home, Perrito," said Juanita. "We are going to Bible School. The missionary said it was for children and not for dogs. Go home and play with Lora. She will talk to you."

Perrito would not go. He didn't want to talk to Lora. Stupid old parrot! All she could say was "Pan para la Lora," which means "Polly wants a cracker"; she thought of nothing but food!

"It's no use," said Carlos, "we may as well go back and tie him up."

And how they did tie him up. Perrito knew he could never get loose, for he was tied with the new rope Carlos had made from the sisal plant his uncle had brought him from Old Mexico. Perrito tugged at the rope, but it wouldn't budge. He barked and whined as long as he could see Carlos and Juanita, and when they were out of sight, he threw back his head and howled.

After awhile Mamacita came around the house from the garden.

"Poor Perrito," she said. "If you promise not to follow Carlos and Juanita, I will untie you."

Perrito whined and barked, and she thought he promised, but he didn't. As soon as he was untied, down the street he went with his nose to the ground, past the mud brick houses in the village, through the Plaza where the old men dozed and slept on the benches in the sun, past the bird-sellers' stands with all the gay and chattering birds, until he found what he was looking for. Under a brush arbor, sitting on a grass mat was Carlos. He was painting a jar with red paint. On another mat sat Juanita, and she was weaving a basket. There were many children,

and Perrito was so happy, for he loved children. He wagged his whole body for joy. What fun to be with so many of them! He ran and jumped in Carlos' lap, upsetting the jar and getting paint on his nose. Carlos was surprised. Tears came into his eyes.

"Now I will have to take you home and miss the rest of Bible School today," he told Perrito.

But Miss Mary, the missionary, called Perrito to her and patted his head. "I don't mind if he stays if he will be a good dog. He may come every day if he will behave."

"Oh, Perrito is a well-behaved dog," said Carlos. And so said Juanita and the other children. So Perrito found a cool place to take a nap while the children finished their work.

Then it was time to sing. When all the children stood up to sing, Perrito stood up too; but when he tried to sing he sounded so funny all the children laughed at him.

Miss Mary said, "Do not laugh at Perrito. He has many things that he could be thankful for. He has a nice place to sleep, a good home with Carlos and Juanita to take care of him and love him, and he has tortillas every day to eat. Perhaps he wants to sing 'Thank you' to God too."

The children began to tell what they were thankful for.

"I am thankful for the house I live in," said Carlos.

Paula was thankful for her Mamacita and her Papacita. Anita was thankful for her nice clothes. Jorge was thankful for the tortillas and frijoles and candied squash seed and all the good things he had to eat. Juan was thankful for the big sombrero that kept the sun and rain off his face. Juanita had the best thank you of all.

"I am thankful for Jesus," she said, "for he is God's best gift to us."

Then the children all sang "Jesus Mis Amo" which is "Jesus Loves Me."

After awhile it was time to go home. Carlos and Juanita

skipped along the road singing their Bible School songs. Perrito ran along beside them. Every now and then he skipped a little too, and he looked funny as he ran on three legs. But Perrito didn't care, for he was very happy. Tomorrow he would go to Bible School again.

GUSSIE GRASS

Virginia Back

One bright day early in Spring a thin, light green, little blade of grass peeped his head up out of the ground and blinked his eyes. He saw something big and bright up in the sky and he saw a lot of other blades of green grass—just like himself, except they were larger.

“Hello, who are you?”, said the blade next to him. The new blade of grass looked around and said, “Why, I'm just me, that's who.”

“Oh, you silly little blade of grass, what is your NAME?”

But the new little blade of grass didn't even know he had to have a name. Then his neighbor, who said his name was Ollie, explained that everyone in the world had a name. They told him that his last name was Grass, and he could choose any name he wanted for a first name. So the new blade began to think. He thought of Joe, and Benny, and Mack, but he wanted a name that sounded like somebody special. Then he thought of it! GUSTAVE GRASS! That really sounded like somebody! All the other grasses laughed at his name and called him Gussie, but he still liked his name.

That day Gussie found out a lot about the world. He learned that there were other things beside grass growing in the ground. Some of them were nice, like the flowers he could see if he stretched his neck. Others were not so nice, like the weeds that try to crowd out the grass.

Then the big, bright thing, which he learned was called the sun, began to go down. It was getting dark, and poor Gussie didn't know what was happening! But his friend, Ollie told him that it was only nighttime, and he should close himself up and go to sleep.

The next morning when Gussie woke up, there were big drops of dew all around him. Ollie showed him how to break one over his head and take a shower bath. Then he used one for a mirror to be sure his face was clean. Gussie loved the little dewdrops, and sometimes he and Ollie would play ball with one. He liked the way they sparkled as they sailed through the air.

Each day as the sun shone down on Gussie, he grew a little taller. One day it rained, and Gussie thought it was just a lot of dewdrops. He and Ollie had so much fun playing in the rain that Gussie was sad when the sun came out again—until he noticed that the rain had made him even taller! Now he was as tall as all the other blades around him, and even taller than some of them. Gussie was very proud of being tall, but all the other blades laughed at him, because they knew something was going to happen!

A few days later Gussie heard a strange, loud noise. At first, it scared him and he wanted to hide. It didn't sound like thunder or a tractor, and it was very close. Too close, thought Gussie. He heard it go whirrrrrr as it went by him. Then here it came again whirrRRRRRR-rrrrr, and it went right over Gussie! When it was gone he felt very different, but he didn't know why! Then he looked at the other blades of grass. Their tops were gone!

And they all were so happy! But Gussie didn't like to have his top cut off! He began to cry, but all the others laughed at him and said he looked much better, but he wouldn't believe them.

The next morning Gussie woke up feeling fine—then he remembered! He wasn't as tall as he used to be. He picked up a dewdrop and looked at himself, and, why, he looked very handsome!

"Well, I guess a top-cut was all I needed," he said to himself. And he started growing all over again.

THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK

Sarah Shannon

Once there was a little black Book. It was put on a shelf and soon something began to fall. Was it snow? No, it wasn't white like snow; it was brown. Yes, it was dust.

Every day more and more dust would collect on this little black book until finally it was almost brown.

One day the little black Book thought, "Well, I might as well go to sleep for no one ever opens me and reads from my pages." So it went to sleep. It slept for a long long time. Then one day it was suddenly awakened. A little boy had picked it up and was wiping off the dust. "Oh," thought the little black Book, "someone is going to read me at last."

There was a rustling at the door, and then a lady said, "Johnny, do you have all the books packed? The moving van will soon be here."

It was only moving day. When they all arrived at the

new home, the little black Book was placed in the bookcase once again to collect dust.

One day Johnny was out playing with some friends, and one of them asked him if he went to Sunday school. He told them he'd never been to Sunday school but he'd like to go with them next Sunday.

Johnny arose early the next Sunday, put on his best suit, white shirt, and brightly shined shoes and went off to Sunday school. That morning in the Junior Department all the boys read from their Bibles about a man named Jesus. Johnny could not read because he did not have a Bible. He went home and asked his mother if she would buy him a Bible for the next Sunday. His mother told him that there was a Bible somewhere in the bookcase that she once carried to Sunday school when she was a little girl.

This time the little black Book was not disappointed, for when Johnny dusted it off it never became dusty again. He read it every night. The little black Book was happy once more for he was being used again.

Now Johnny can truly say, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee."

RISKY FRISKY

Maxine Robinson

Jane and Bob were walking in the woods on a spring morning when they met a little gray squirrel. Gray Squirrel's tail went swish, swish, whiz! He whirled and he twirled and then stood up on his little hind legs. He perked up his little ears and listened to the children's voices. Then he made a little barking noise.

"Chu-u-u-p! Ch-u-u-p! Ch-u-up!" he said. "Who are you? Did you come to harm me? Do you want to be my friend?"

Gray Squirrel loved children, but she had had some unhappy experiences with boys who threw rocks at her.

"Look, Bob!" called Jane. "There is a little gray squirrel. Isn't she cute?"

"Let's name her Risky Frisky. She is so frisky, and her tail moves so fast," said Bob.

Jane and Bob had some nuts in their pockets, so they threw them on the ground near Risky Frisky. Risky Frisky was frightened and scampered up the big oak tree as fast as she could make her little feet move.

"Risky Frisky, Risky Frisky," called Jane.

Risky Frisky looked at Jane and Bob again and decided they were friendly children. She made her way back down the big oak tree.

When she reached the ground, she went hippity-hop, hippity-hop, over to the nuts. She whirled and twirled and began to bark.

"Chu-u-p, ch-u-up!" she said. "Thank you, thank you."

The children stayed until Risky Frisky had dug a hole in the ground and buried the nuts. That was the way she stored the nuts.

The next day Jane and Bob went to visit Risky Frisky again.

"Bob! What is Frisky doing with those leaves?" asked Jane.

"It looks like she is building a nest," answered Bob.

"Do squirrels build their nest from leaves?" Jane asked.

"Yes, the squirrels build their nest from leaves, paper, twigs, and bits of rag they carry up into the tree. Sometimes the hole, or entrance into the nest, is such a small opening that you can hardly believe a squirrel could squeeze into it," said Bob.

Frisky was so busy working that she didn't hear the children coming.

"Risky Frisky, Risky Frisky," called Jane. "We brought you some dried bread and bits of apple."

Bob and Jane had read in a book that squirrels like dried bread and apples. After Frisky ate the bread and apple, she whirled and twirled and stood up on her little hind legs.

"Chu-up! Chu-up!" she said. "Thank you, I must go back to my work."

Days and days passed before Jane and Bob made another visit to the woods. This time Frisky was doing the strangest thing!

"Look, Bob, something is happening! Frisky has a baby squirrel, and she is carrying it in her mouth," said Jane.

"Don't get so excited, Jane, you might cause Frisky to drop the baby," explained Bob. "Frisky has a family in the oak tree nest. The babies have grown so big she has to find them a larger home. They call the new nest a 'dray.' It is made of twigs and leaves. Sometimes squirrels use an old crow's nest and fill it with soft leaves. The nest is nice and warm for the babies."

"Doesn't Risky Frisky look like a nice mother, carrying her babies," said Jane.

"There are one—two—three—four little baby squirrels," counted Bob.

"Chu-up, chu-up, chu-up!" said Frisky. "See my nice family."

"Isn't this a nice surprise?" said Jane.

THE LITTLE BIRD WITH THE BROKEN WING

Author Unknown

Jimmie and Susan hurried along the path toward home. They had been over to visit Aunt Mary, and Mother had told them that they must be home before dark. If they hurried, they'd just about make it, for the sun was just beginning to set. Suddenly, up ahead of them in the gathering shadows, they saw something fluttering and jumping along in the path.

"Oh, what is that?" cried Jimmie.

"It looks like a bird," said Susan.

"And I think it has been hurt," said Jimmie.

"Let's stop and see what's the matter with it, Jimmie," said Susan.

"All right," answered Jimmie, "I don't think Mother will care if we're a few minutes late. She tells us to be kind to animals and birds."

Jimmie stooped down and parted the weeds where the little bird had tried to hide.

"Here it is, Susan," he said finally, "I think it has a broken wing."

Susan took it gently in her hands, and they hurried on home.

When they got home, Mother was waiting for them on the porch. "Why are you so late, children?" she asked. "I was beginning to get worried about you."

"Oh, Mother," said Jimmie and Susan at the same time. "We found a poor little bird with a broken wing hopping along in the road, and we didn't think you'd mind if we stopped long enough to catch it."

Susan handed the bird to her Mother, and they went into the living room where Daddy was sitting. Daddy took it and examined it carefully. Then he said, "I don't think the wing is really broken, but it is badly hurt. I'll fix it a little cage, and we'll keep it until it is well."

The next morning Jimmie and Susan were up early. They put water in the cage for the little bird and also grain for it to eat.

At first, the little bird was scared when they came near the cage. It would run to the other side and try to hide from them. Because it was so scared, they nicknamed it Fraidy. But after several days it became more friendly, and finally it began to like the children to come near the cage. One morning as Susan started to put the grain into the cage, it pecked a grain from her hand.

"Look, Jimmie," said Susan, "Fraidy wants to eat his breakfast from my hand this morning."

After that, Susan and Jimmie took turns letting him eat from their hands. One night Daddy came home from work and said, "Children, let's let Fraidy out of his cage tonight and see if he can fly; he seems to be getting well."

They let him out of the cage, and up he flew, from one corner of the house to the other; then he flew down and lighted on the table and tilted his head to one side as if to say, "See, I am well now. I can fly as good as ever."

"Well, children," said Daddy, "you've done a fine job of caring for Fraidy, and now he is all well again. Tomorrow you must take him out in the open and turn him loose again."

"Oh, please, Daddy, let us keep him," cried Susan, "he loves us now, and we'll take good care of him."

"I'm sorry," Daddy said kindly, "but we must let him go. He is used to flying in the open air and sunshine and living in trees."

Susan and Jimmie went to bed very unhappy. They felt

so sad because they had to tell little Fraidy good-by. The next morning, when they took him out to let him go, each of them kissed him on top of his shiny brown head. Then they let him loose. He flew a little way and lighted on a limb and tilted his head to one side as if to say, "Good-by, Susan and Jimmie. Thank you for taking care of me." Then he fluttered his little wings and flew high, high into the air and out of sight.

That night when they sat down to supper, Susan looked over at the empty cage and thought of little Fraidy. She couldn't eat her supper, and big tears kept slipping down her cheeks and splashing in her plate.

When they started to have family prayer, Daddy quietly turned to Matthew 6:26 and read, "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them."

After their prayers, when Mother was tucking them into bed, Susan looked up at her and said, "Mother, I don't feel so sad about letting Fraidy go now, since Daddy read to us tonight. If God takes care of the birds, then I know Fraidy will get better care than we could give him."

PETER'S PAL

Hattie Bell Allen

"Come with us, Peter," begged Bert.

The boys were on their way home from school and had stopped at an open gate leading into Miss Lida's front yard. Bert told Peter his plan.

"We can gather and sell the walnuts from this old tree and get circus tickets and popcorn and peanuts for all five of us. Miss Lida's gone. Come on, Peter."

Peter hesitated. It would be great to see that circus—the elephants, the lions, the ponies, the monkeys, and the funny clowns! How he wanted to go! Miss Lida was gone and had been gone for several months. The walnuts would be wasted. Why not go in with the boys? They could make use of the money.

He was about to walk through the gate when a voice inside him said, “The walnuts are Miss Lida’s.”

“I know it,” answered Peter, “but Miss Lida would give them to us.”

“She might give you some of them. But don’t you remember what Miss Lida said about that Korean baby? She wants to sell those walnuts and send the money to Korea. There might be enough money to feed a baby a whole month. Suppose Miss Lida comes back soon, as she likely will. If the walnuts are gone, what will she do? Can you steal food from a Korean baby like that?”

“No!” said Peter aloud.

“Not afraid, are you?” asked Bert. “Nobody to see. Come on. We can’t miss that circus.”

Bert pointed toward the tree where Ralph was already knocking down the nuts with a long pole. Tim and James were looking on.

“Bert,” said Peter, “you know how I want to go to that circus. But I can’t take those walnuts. My Pal would be hurt.” And he turned to walk away.

“Come back, Peter,” called Bert. “What do you mean, your pal? We are your pals, and we’ll be hurt if you don’t help us. You are big enough to climb the tree and get the finest ones.”

Peter came back and faced all the boys, who by this time had gathered at the gate.

“Listen, fellows. Miss Lida is our Sunday school teacher, and this is her missionary tree. She wants to sell those walnuts and send the money to feed a Korean baby. Do

you think I can take food out of that baby's mouth, just to buy me a circus ticket? Jesus has helped me to do right. Jesus would see me and would be hurt. Ever since he has been my Pal, if I listen to him, I can't go wrong. It's stealing to take these walnuts, and it's wrong to steal. I won't do it, and I wish you wouldn't."

The boys began to look at one another. Could they take the walnuts after what Peter had said? Would not Peter's Pal see them, too, and be hurt?

"I'll tell you," said Peter, "instead of going to the circus, let's feed the Korean baby. We can gather the walnuts for Miss Lida, sell them, and have the money ready when she comes back. Somebody might steal them and then that baby over in Korea would have to go hungry. What do you say?"

The boys readily agreed. They worked hard until every walnut had been gathered and loaded in Tim's big red wagon. It was filled to overflowing.

Early the next morning, five excited boys pulled the load of walnuts to the candy shop where they knew they could sell them.

"Howdy, boys," greeted Mr. Adams, "what can I do for you?"

"Good morning, Mr. Adams," said Bert. "We have some mighty fine walnuts to sell. They are Miss Lida's. We gathered them from that missionary tree in her front yard. The money goes to help feed Korean babies. Want to buy them?"

"Why, yes!"

Mr. Adams measured them carefully, put them into the bin and handed each boy a dollar bill.

"Thank you, boys. They are worth a lot since they grew on a missionary tree. And you were fine boys to gather them for Miss Lida."

With happy hearts the boys started home. They had to

pass Miss Lida's house. As they came near the gate, they saw Miss Lida. She had come home and was looking for the walnuts.

The boys ran in quickly and held up the dollar bills. "Here's your money, Miss Lida," said Bert. "We've sold your walnuts. If it had not been for Peter's Pal, we would have taken the money for ourselves. But he made us want to help you feed your Korean baby."

"Peter's Pal will always lead you right," Miss Lida said, as she thanked the boys. "Sometimes it is hard to follow him, but it always pays."

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